THE COOLEST INTERNET MAGAZINE ON PLANET EARTH

INTERNET underground

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Alien Stiff: E.T. or F/X?

Internet Cool

Digital Ink

Volume 1 Issue 1
A Sendai Media Periodical
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DECEMBER, 1995
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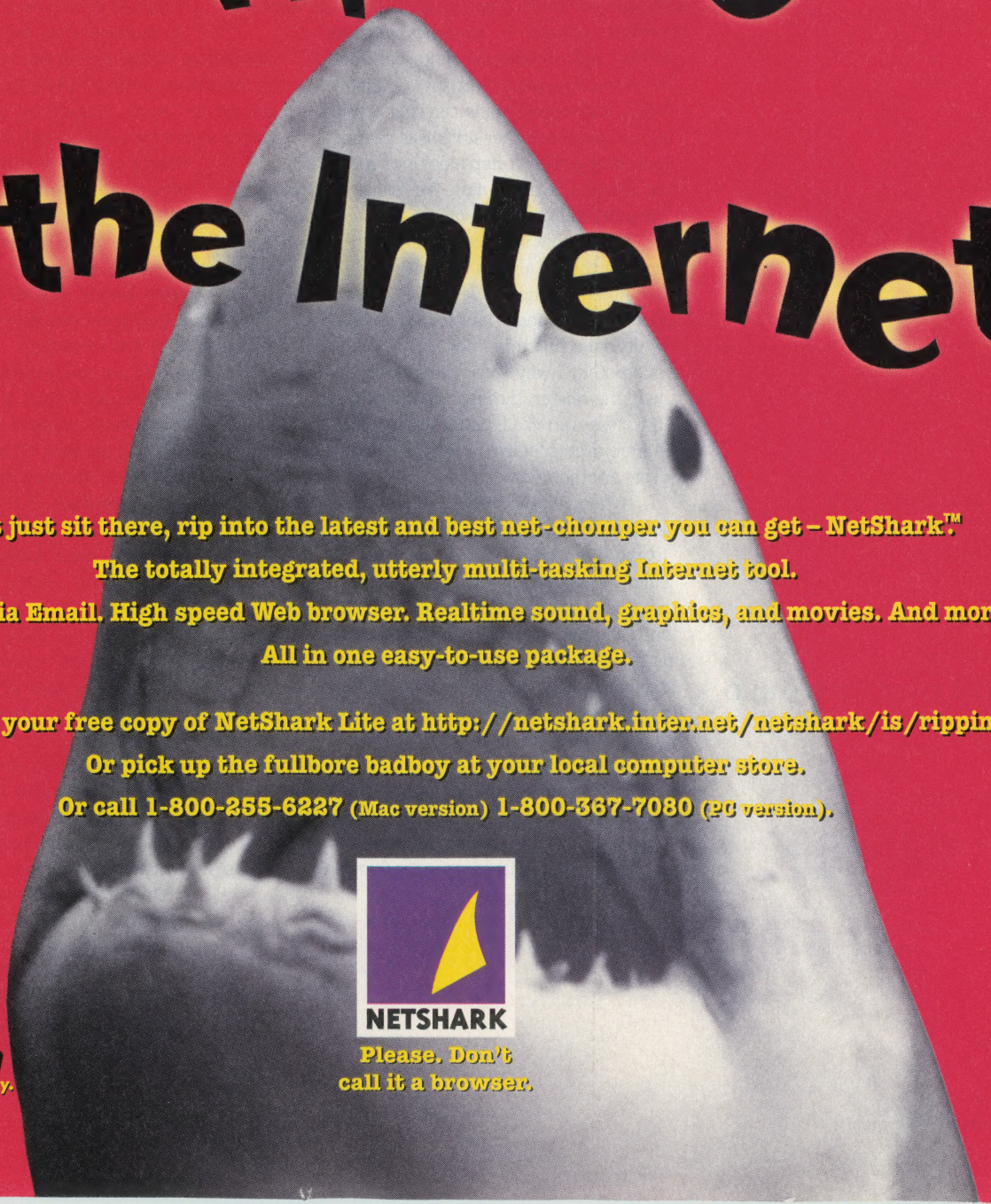

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A decoded note from the Underground

WHY THE 'NET IS NOT LIKE CB RADIOS, TV OR DISNEY WORLD

We don't like Disney World. No, no. Let us rephrase that. We don't like the above-ground portions of Disney with those well-manicured pathways, perfectly maintained lawns and Technicolor buildings against a crisp, clear-blue sky.

Sure, Space Mountain can be exhilarating and the Haunted House is always a good time, but then what have you got? Rather, we prefer the side of Disney World we were once lucky enough to glimpse: the normally off-limits "backstage area."

In that underbelly of Fantasyland, we saw Goofy walk around without his oversized head, smoking a cigarette. Mammoth industrial cooling pipes wound like snakes to destinations marked only by generic nameplates on whitewashed doors. The normally pleasant workers, crowded around a vending machine, scowled and complained about park politics. A young woman wearing a Metallica T-shirt and ripped jeans carrying a prim, lacy costume over her arms was getting a firm talking-to by a stern-looking supervisor. All of it fascinated us. We realized this was how the park really worked, on grit and agitation.

By far, that undiscovered country known as the underground always seems more interesting. Sometimes, simply due to its unintentional, unmapped landscape designed with only function, not aesthetics, in mind. That's why we've decided to take you, the reader, through the Internet via this less-trafficked pathway. To gain a different perspective, you have to look at something from another view.

When you think about it, no one really sees the exterior of the Internet anyway. Sitting bleary-eyed in the dim glow of our screens, we feel like we're simply wandering, glimpsing the programmed innards of one computer before bouncing onto another. What would all these small parts put together look like if they were assembled? (see diagram at right) We like that the Internet seems a shapeless, shifting perpetual work in progress.

This ambiguity may be one reason the mainstream media has not quite figured out how to report on the Internet yet. Nor has Congress fully grasped how to respond. As usual, when either of those groups don't quite grasp something, yet view it as potentially dangerous, that entity is sensationalized and branded as "bad" before being properly investigated. We think we understand the way the world of the Internet functions, so we can be a little more responsible. One thing you'll never read in *Internet Underground* will be scare stories about children and cyberporn. You will read about how a sex bulletin board service compares to a real call girl. Now *that's* worth investigating.

Many people compare the Internet to the embarrassing Citizens Band trend of the '70s. With regret, we remember such grating movies as *Convoy* and *Smokey and the Bandit* or TV shows such as the loathsome *Dukes of Hazard*. Everyone assumed a handle (even two of the *IU* staffers who were in elementary school during the craze). People drove around, talking to others on the road, amazed by their ability to tap into a collective voice simply by depressing a button. But that was all we got: voices drifting in fields of static, offering messages encoded in jargon. Rarely could you have actual conversations; after all, everyone else was listening.

CB radio died for many reasons, but mostly because those small boxes were designed with only one purpose, allowing only for two-way audio communication. So after awhile, when the novelty wore off, most folks took down those odd, hefty antennas. Later, we as a nation shuddered at the thought that we were promoting the trucking culture, defined simply by guys who drove trucks, ate in diners and aged rapidly due to sleep deprivation.

People also compare the Web to television. But we ask, when you admire someone's TV show, can you then get in touch with them almost immediately? On the 'net, however, you can just hit the "e-mail me" hyperlink. You can converse or make friends in public or private. One of our goals is to get into the minds of those who create this intimate space. Without people

figure 1: The Internet (artist's rendition)

to create Web pages, oversee newsgroups or maintain mailing lists, the Internet would be empty bandwidth.

That's why one of our first missions was to seek out the "Arbiters of Cool," those judges who help direct traffic to sites they deem good, bad or just plain useless. We learned Cool Site of the Day was predicted to last less than a month; now the site boasts 40,000 hits a day. Speaking of hits, we take on that issue too, examining just what makes up a "hit" and how some companies plan to police those claims in Netline, our news section.

In our cover story, John Wesley Hardin takes a look at the trouble with security on the 'net, prompted by the recent hacker inroads to the supposedly secure Netscape browser. He also examines the future generations of browsers, including Netscape Gold, VRML, Hot Java and Blackbird, to offer a glimpse of what the Web will look like a year from now.

Each month, we plan to take a closer look at specific pages on the Web, talk to their creators and learn a little bit more than what's offered in the hyperlinks. This month, we learn how one man fooled a nation with a phony crime-scene investigation. Showing the dexterity of the same medium, we also profile pages from Twinkie experimenters and an Oklahoma City retiree who worked her fascination with Marilyn Monroe into a haunting narrative.

Mirksy, of Worst of the Web fame, joins our staff as a monthly columnist. In this issue, Mirsky sets out to find celebrities but falls a little short of his goal (you can find out more about Mirsky in our Arbiters of Cool section). Justin Hall, of the infamous Justin's Links to the Underground, also joins us to write our first 403 Forbidden column, named after the standard response one gets after trying to poke a browser where it doesn't belong. Hall, who helped launch *HotWired*, explains why online sex needs to be put into the proper context.

We start each month's issue with the Net Top 10. This does not necessarily pinpoint the 10 absolute best Web sites (as if anyone could ever quantify such a thing), but rather sites unearthed by the *IU* staff that we feel everyone really ought to check out. Weird on the Web features our picks for odd and unusual destinations. This month, we ended up finding such oddities as the Nipple Server and a Shaman who offers spiritual healing over the phone lines.

In the '60s, one phrase rang out: "Tune in, turn on and drop out." In the '90s, a similar one may be coined as well. "Sign on, log in and drop out." The drop out part refers to the hours spent in front of a computer, putting off that term paper, avoiding that laundry or actually talking to live people. Other magazines keep trying to sell you on the importance of the 'net to your daily life. Plan your trips! Check on your stocks! We believe firmly that the Internet has value, no question. But sometimes, it's just a time suck, an addictive trap that hard to escape. No one knows that better than an *IU* staff member. We admit, there's no valid reason to spend time reading the results of two college guys' experiments designed to learn whether Twinkies have intelligence. Well, there's one: It's fun and we like fun.

So we invite you to the Underground, including those of you who are new to the 'net. All kindred spirits are welcome here. You don't even need to learn a secret handshake. Just sign on, log in and d

r

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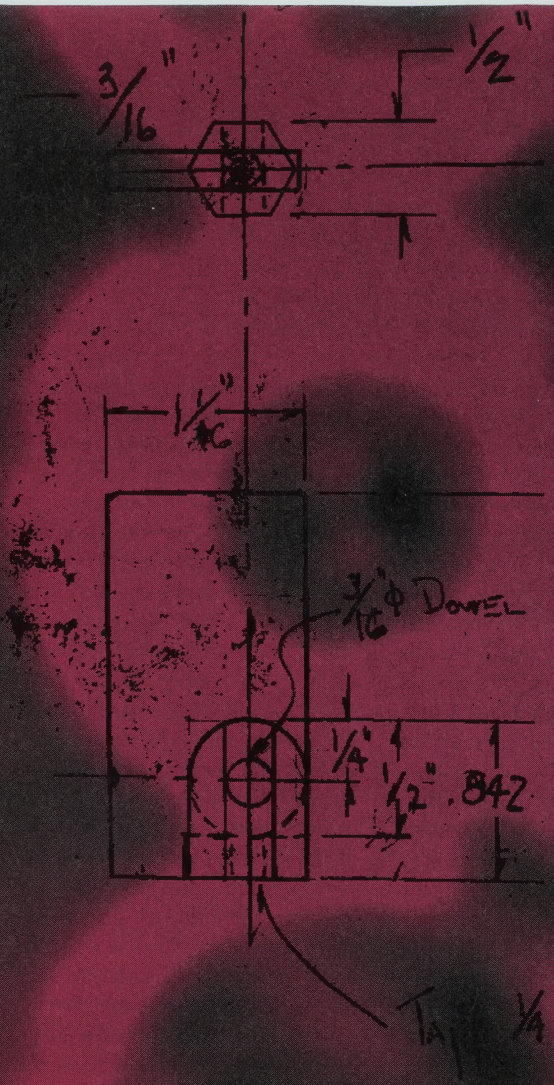
out...



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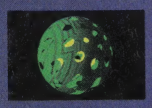
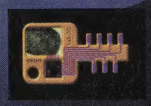

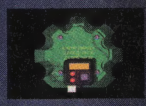

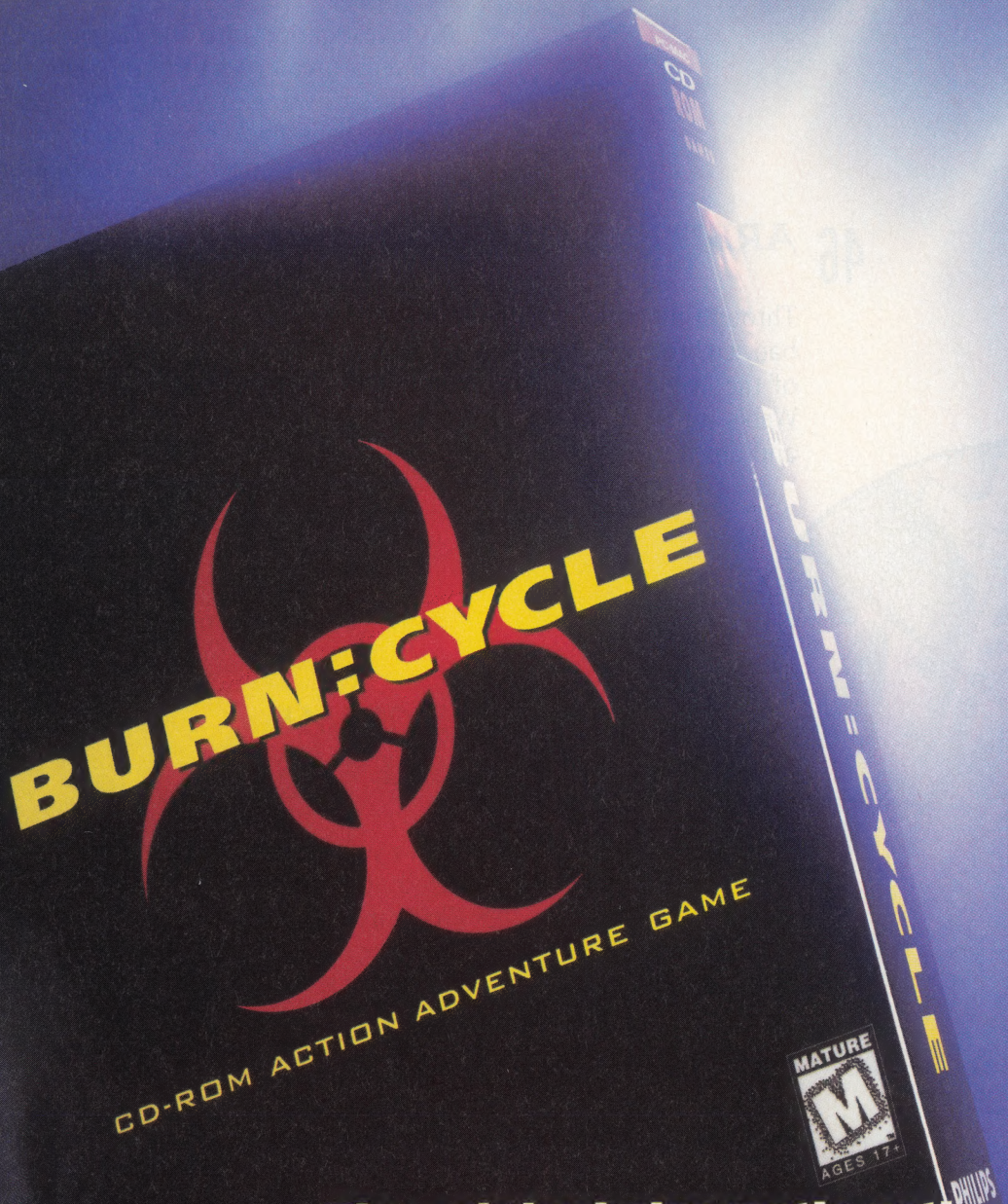

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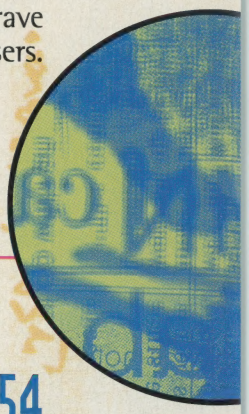

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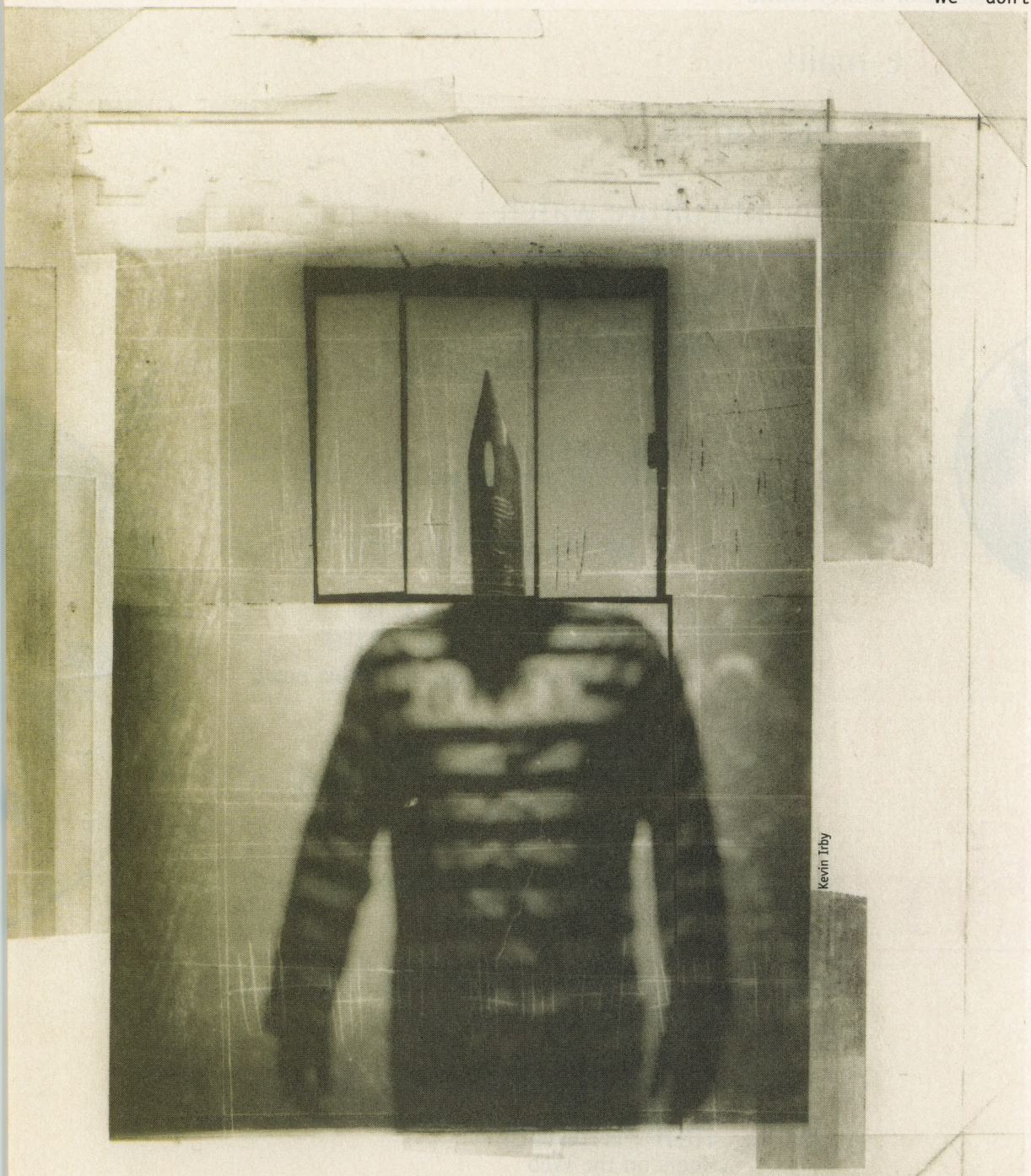
> Nobody listens to you.
You're feeling shackled.
If only you could set your thoughts

> So write us.
We'll listen
Why not?
We don't have any letters.



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net top ten

1

The Marilyn Pages
http://ionet.net:
80/~jellenc/marilyn.html

This site offers a haunting tribute to the sad, troubled life of Marilyn Monroe. With generous text and excellent images of the ethereal star in an understated design, creator Ellen Cotton paints a vivid portrait of the lonely icon. Her site is a refreshing change from those that nearly shock a reader with alarming backgrounds or lack any organization. These pages link to Cotton's home page, a well-designed launch pad for eclectic, well-executed pages. See Spotlight, page 69.

2

The Atomic Bomb WWW Museum
http://www.csi.ad.jp/
ABOMB/index.html

This Japan-based site clearly and respectfully offers an interesting look at the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima with haunting images and stories of survivors. The site also offers a "walking tour" of Peace Park and monuments in both cities. The text breaks into easy-to-read narratives to weave together a complete story of two cities thrown forever into the limelight of history. Although created by Japanese authors, the site does not place any blame on the United States for its actions.

3

Alien Autopsy Face Off How to Make an Alien
http://www.cinenet.
net/trudang

Rumors about UFOs and the infamous Roswell alien autopsy abound on the Internet. At this exhaustive site compiled by special effects epxert Trey Stokes, you can get the low-down on the videotape aired last fall by Fox that supposedly documents an actual autopsy of an alien recovered in the 1947 crash of a flying saucer in the desert outside Roswell, N.M. Stokes points out inconsistencies and offers explainations on how the whole thing could be hoaxed through his five-part "How to Make an Alien" instructions. The site offers links to find out what other experts think of the footage. Explicit photos, not for the queasy.

4

The Evan Strikes Back
http://www.cs.utk.edu:
80/~ereynold/cgi-bin/sw.html

Immediately confirming his good taste by centering his trilogy page on *The Empire Strikes Back*, Evan Reynolds' homage to *Star Wars* marks an impressive labor of love with a sardonic edge. His Cut Scenes page even throws in a humorous list of fake edits, including "The Dinner Scene on Bespin where Lando pulls out the Colt 45" and "The Outrageous Ernie and Bert cantina shot." Don't miss Dinner with Darth—where you get to see David Prowse unmasked.

5 Two-Minute Warning

http://www.dtd.com/tmw/tmw.cgi

This pleasant diversion from Team NFL lets football fans win stuff like mini-helmets signed by Barry Sanders (who, the game says, will lead the Lions to the Super Bowl, showing us that trivia buffs

aren't necessarily good prognosticators). Most fans have no real shot at winning, since the game pretty much requires eight Hail Marys for touchdowns, eight two-point conversions and seven kick-off recoveries in two minutes to even qualify. But the game itself is enough to justify an afternoon of procrastination.

6 The Unofficial Brady Home Page Encyclopedia Brady

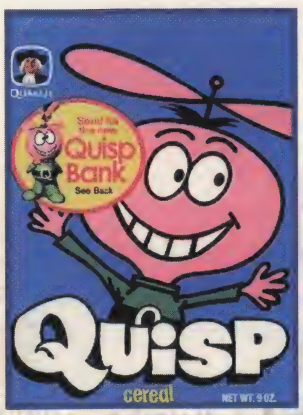
http://www.teleport.com/~btucker/bradys.htm
http://www.primenet.com/~dbrady

These closely linked sites pay an amazing, fact-filled salute to America's favorite unrealistic family of the 1970s. Included in the impressive Unofficial Home Page are the blueprints of the famous house (that show it's architecturally impossible), sound clips and a wacky free screen saver. The encyclopedia, created by Los Angeles Times writer David Brady, offers a shelf filled with tidbits about every aspect of Brady life.

7 Crunch, The Cereal Box Hall of Fame

http://www.ice.net/~crunch/

Cruising the Web over a bowl of Froot Loops? Be sure to check out the Crunch Cereal Box Collection. The site's highlight is a gallery of vintage cereal boxes ranging from classics like the cavity-inducing Quisp to flashes-in-the-bowl like Sir Grapefellow that made the milk taste like a weak Merlot. Plus there's a connection to the Cereal FAQ where you can trace the history of the Lucky Charms marshmallows.



8 Internet Underground Music Archives

http://www.iuma.com

No, we're not related to this site. Let's get that straight right now. They just have good taste in name selection. But this, one of the most heavily visited spots on the Web, is worth putting on your hot list as it offers a clearinghouse for alternative bands and independent labels. This impressive site provides exposure to bands that would normally have a difficult time gaining a national audience, much less access to an international arena.

9 NUKE

http://www.nuke.com/index.html

All right, allow us a moment for self-indulgence as we name the Web site dedicated to computer games, video games, movies, TVs, comic books and all other kinds of nifty stuff in a user-friendly format. From Sendai Media Group, the parent company of *Internet Underground*, this is a good place to spend a time. We'd say that even if we weren't so biased, we swear.

10 The Salvador Dali Museum

http://www.highwayone.com/dali

We highlight this site for its sense of fun. As the front page loads, you're warned, "Please, don't click on the flies or clocks." Of course, we did, and were subjected to shameless sales pitches for the St. Petersburg, Fla., museum's mousepad and other items. At $17.06, we passed on the pad, but we did download the free Dali wallpaper (comes in three styles) and took the surrealism quiz. This site does well reproducing the few images it does offer (one of which is amazingly huge in real life), and the site offers loads of information about the innovative artist and his work. We're hoping they offer a free screen saver next.

A BBS vs. an actual CALL GIRL

By Greg Grabianski

It's late at night. You're horny and in need of some "special companionship." What do you do? Call up an escort service? "Nah," you think, "too much trouble." Instead, you decide to get some action by logging onto a sexy, adults-only Bulletin Board Service (BBS). Well, my foul little friend, are you in for a surprise. Which is easier? Take a look at our comparison.

A BBS takes about 48 hours for your application to be scrutinized and accepted for their legal protection.
A CALL GIRL takes about 48 minutes to get to your place, unless she stops to buy protection.

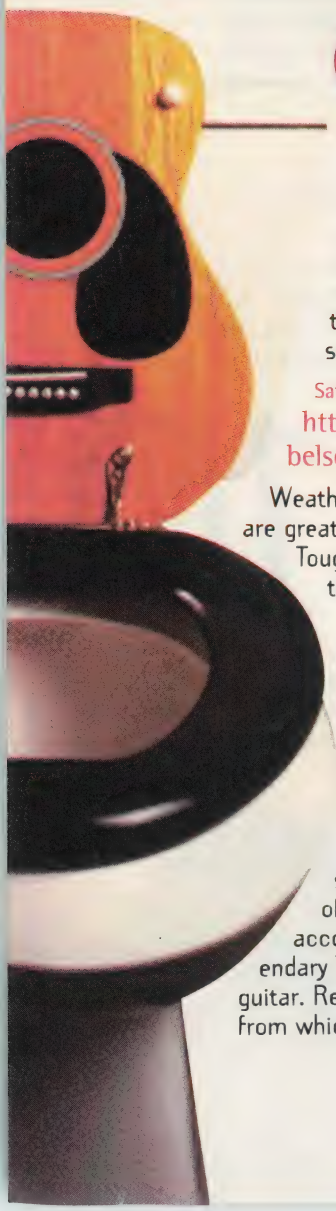
A BBS may call you back to verify if you are a man or a woman.
A CALL GIRL may call you back to verify if you WANT a man or a woman.

BBS: If you're lucky, you'll need to furnish just two IDs to prove that you're 18years old.
CALL GIRL: If you're lucky, you might get one that's 18years old.

BBS: Some of them will screw you with their $50 fee before you get on and discuss.
CALL GIRL: Some of them will discuss their $50 fee before they get on and screw you.

A BBS will help you if you're having trouble downloading.
A CALL GIRL will help you if you're having trouble uploading.

BBS: It's quite possible that the woman writing about giving you oral sex is, in fact, a man.
CALL GIRL: It's quite possible that the woman giving you oral sex, is in fact, a man.



BARGAIN BIN

There's lots of stuff to buy on the Internet, but each month, we'll bring you a little extra-special bargain--something you wouldn't think could be retailed in the ether. This month's selections:

Sani-Pottie Portable and Pit-Type Toilets
http://webmart.freedom.net/belson/ptoilets.html

Weather-resistant Sani-potties are great for any outdoor setting. Tough polyethyne construction throughout will not rot or corrode and never needs painting. 190 lbs. $633.50. From Belson Manufacturing Co.

Make it an extra-special portable potty with a seat from Jammin' Johns at http://www.iglou.com/Jammin-Johns/. Their seats combine the comfort of a finely crafted bathroom accoutrement with the legendary looks of your favorite guitar. Retail: $99. Several styles from which to choose.

Numbers on the 'Net

A comparative look at random Webcrawler searches on the following words:

Mainstream - 593	Underground - 2,120
Christian - 3,375	Pagan - 223
Jesus - 1,113	Satan - 316
Good - 0	Evil - 955
Light - 6,209	Darkness - 537

Netspeak

"Most people have only seen the comedic side of me. But really, there's much more. I just haven't revealed it yet. It takes time. I'll get my *'Pulp Fiction.'*"

-Pauly Shore on America Online

"I won't play a character who shoots or is shot at, who's raped or stalked or battered. That leaves me with a limited number of roles. I keep waiting."

-Oprah Winfrey on AOL

"We don't feel that way. If you had the intent to kill somebody, you're the one with the problem."

-Directors Albert and Allen Hughes, discussing whether film violence causes real violence, on AOL

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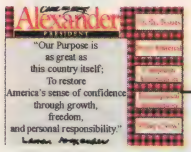
culture.watch

alt.

Degrees of Separation:

Politics and porn virtual neighbors?

WITH FAMILY VALUES a top issue for all the presidential candidates, IU decided to see just how far removed our cultural watchdogs are from cyberporn, the enemy *du jour* of a supposedly wholesome society. Think you can do it faster? Give it a shot, then send in your results to IU@mcs.net. The winner will appear in next month's *Internet Underground*. But remember, no search engines; make your connections via hyperlinks only. A couple of hints: the Christian Coalition's site is harder to escape than Alcatraz, so you'll have to be creative (we had to sneak out, ironically, through Alan Keyes). HAPPY HUNTING!

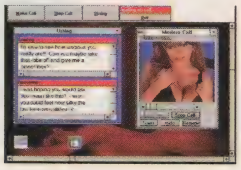


EIGHT LINKS!

Lamar Alexander
http://www.gramm96.org

World Wide Wank Ftp://ftp.netcom.com/pub/ea/earl/WorldWideWank.html

SIX LINKS!



Phil Gramm
http://www.gramm96.org

Live Nude Video Teleconferencing
http://www.virtualdreams.com

FIVE LINKS!

The White House
http://www.whitehouse.gov

Way Dirty Pix
http://www.fatass.com

And the Winner is!

ONLY FOUR LINKS!

The Christian Coalition
http://cc.org/cc/welcome/

Bianca's Smut Shack
http://bianca.com/shack

Http://TV.com
Selected references to the 'net on that

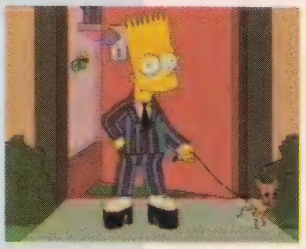
OTHER MEDIUM

Hmmm...Internet...
Smilies to the producers of *The Simpsons* for quality 'net usage.

On Sept. 24, upon hearing about a new film featuring his favorite superhero, Bart anxiously asked, "Who's going to play Radioactive Man?"

"I will tell you in exactly seven minutes," the owner of the comics and cards store haughtily replied. He waddled back to his computer (running UNIX, if you looked closely) and said, "Okay, here we are... alt.nerd.obsessive." He typed, "Need to know star RM pic."

Several geeks around the country received his message. One guy strapped on a pair of Spock ears. Another had a model of the Enterprise atop his computer. Finally, a guy crouched under a table in Hollywood received the message. Whipping out a stethoscope, he held it to the bottom of the table as the directors discussed casting the film. Thus, our heroes learned of Dirk Richter's involvement in the film.



JUST LIKE REAL LIFE, EH?

DUBIOUS DUPLICITY

Meanwhile, FLAMES to the producers of the NBC sitcom *Hope and Gloria.*

An early season show depicted protagonist Hope getting herself into all kinds of trouble for misdirecting an e-mail intended for an object of affection. SUPPOSEDLY, that wacky Hope hit one button and sent the message out to her "global list." IMPROBABLY, that list included everyone at the fictional TV station at which she's employed--and Ted Turner! Why a slack associate producer would have the CEO of a parent company on her personal list is a mystery to us, but two other elements troubled us more. For one, Hope sent the message from her laptop WITHOUT BEING HOOKED UP to a phone jack for her modem! We did not observe any wireless modem attached to her gear. Then she coaxed the geeky systems administrators to help her with some crisis management by breaking into other employees' mailboxes and taking the message out. How a sysop at an affiliate would have access to Turner's personal mail queue seems questionable. BUT MORE TROUBLING: Do the show's creators support such blatant acts of disrespect to allow break-ins to personal mailboxes simply to avoid a little embarrassment to some hapless co-worker?

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INTERNET CONNECTION™

'96 VERSION

Let Your Fingers Do the Surfing!

Internet Connection™ '96 is a completely rewritten version of Microforum's best-selling Internet Sites Directory. Now with an improved user interface which takes advantage of Windows® '95 features, finding your way around the World-Wide-Web has never been easier.

Microforum's user-friendly interface allows you to search quickly and easily for any Internet Site, and includes a one-step connection to your browser.

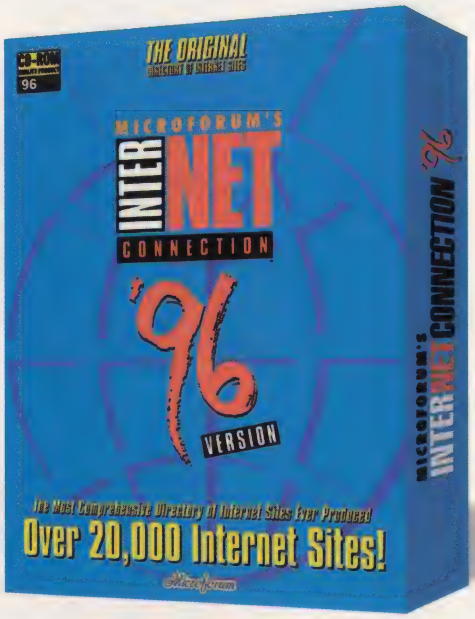
A great new feature for Internet Connection™ '96 is "Quick Access" which acts as an Internet "telephone book" by storing search results of your favorite Internet sites. Quick Access is designed to be used in conjunction with your Web browser (most popular browsers are supported) eliminating the need for the clipboard - no more cut and paste, just press a button and the selected site pops up!

Multilingual Version
Supporting: English, French and Italian, (other languages are also available).

The ORIGINAL Internet Yellow Pages
The Most Comprehensive Directory of Internet Sites Ever Produced

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
IBM OR COMPATIBLE AT 386 OR HIGHER, VGA CARD, VGA (COLOR MONITOR), HARD DISK, 4 MB OF RAM, WINDOWS® 3.1.
•CD-ROM Drive

Finally,
A WAY TO FIND THE RIGHT CONNECTION



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Microforum®

NETLINE

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: NEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Number of subscribers

to Internet-access

gateway service

providers (est):

1,500,000

Number of subscribers

to America Online (est):

3,400,000

Microsoft's net income

for the third quarter:

$499,000,000

Netscape's net income

for the third quarter:

$1,400,000

From TV to the WWW

Giving networking a whole new meaning

With so many comparisons of the Web to television, it was only a matter of time before TV producers moved in to claim a piece of the action on the 'net.

As of press time, one of the first line-ups of Web programs was expected to kick off Nov. 20 from the NETwork at http://www.thenetwork.net, an online production company headed by two TV veterans.

"This isn't *Wayne's World*," says NETwork co-owner William D'Angelo. "We're not two college guys sitting in our basement putting out some site."

Far from it. D'Angelo has a lengthy TV resume that includes stints as executive producer on more than two dozen projects, including *Pee Wee's Playhouse*, *Webster*, *Love American Style* and *Top Cops*.

His partner, Dean Vallas, is an Emmy-nominated, 20-year veteran of the news business who founded CNN's Middle East Bureau. They formed the NETwork with the hopes of becoming the NBC of the bandwidth, but they are not alone—several companies, both large and small, are scrambling to put programming on the 'net. One example is Songline Productions, a joint effort of Global Network Navigator and American Online. Songline expects to launch *Ferndale*, an interactive

comedic soap opera, starting sometime in January.

Initial programming on the NETwork has been designed to attract 18- to 49-year-old men no longer satiated by sitcoms, D'Angelo says. With that demographic in mind, the bulk of the initial six programs focuses more on seedier scenarios and criminals than typical sitcom fare.

Whodunit? will be a weekly series similar to a standard TV show, except that the ending will not be revealed or neatly tied up. Instead, viewers will be able to mull over all the supporting material for the story to figure out the solution before the answer is revealed the following week.

Another crime-related program, *The Murder Book*, doesn't rely on story writers, but instead allows viewers to go through evidence from true, unsolved murders (similar to the crime scene profiled on page 70). Allowing such extensive public documentation on ongoing investigations will be a first, D'Angelo says. Each episode will guide viewers through an original investigation, led by the chief detective on the case. Ironically, the much-maligned Los Angeles Police Department will inaugurate the program by providing the details of the first two murder cases.

Also planned for the NETwork is the magazine *CoverStory*, billed as a cross between *People* and *The New Yorker*, with promises of writing by high-profile writers such as Pete Hamill and Jimmy Breslin. A graphic novel from *Peanuts* animator Bill Melendez will depict the battle of an evil casino vs. a good one in *Las Vegas Confidential*. The animated weekly series set in the futuristic Sin City is expected to run 30 to 40 new pages each week.

In developing the weekly shows for the 'net the trio learned that they had to do something not commonly done in TV: Consider the brains of the viewer.

"In this venue, we can't do a lot of car chases or police shootings," says *Whodunit?* producer Joe Hamill. "We have to rely on intelligence, not action."

-KATHLEEN FLINN

How to surf the 'net for fun and profit

From wineries to the NFL, companies scattered throughout cyberspace are increasingly turning to promotional giveaways to draw users to their sites, scooping up precious advertising dollars and repeat hits in the process. 'net surfers can find numerous ways to win prizes on the Web, or, in the case of one company, even through e-mail.

Yoyodyne Entertainment, the creators of the popular Prodigy gameshow *GUTS*, will be giving away the grand prize for their first Internet-wide contest, The Classic Car Challenge, in December. Seth Godin, Yoyodyne's president, chose e-mail for their current slate of contests for two reasons: to keep the contests simple and to make the trivia-based competitions platform independent, meaning that players can participate for free

regardless of computer type or online affiliation. A million users are expected to participate by the end of the year for a shot at a new Mazda Miata. The Classic Car Challenge is only the first step—following the success of their initial launches, Yoyodyne prepared an entire fall and winter lineup, all backed by commercial sponsors. "The audience is huge for e-mail and the simpler these games are, the more they sell," Grodin says.

If the odds of winning one Mazda Miata seem a bit steep, CompuServe's Treasure Hunt offers trivia buffs an opportunity to win smaller weekly prizes as well as a final grand prize of $20,000. The weekly takes vary from the worthwhile (a trip to Australia) to the lame (a CompuServe umbrella), with the game itself requiring little beyond an ability to hyperlink. But the variety and value of prizes, totaling $1 million in giveaways, should provide more than

"I'll take ONLINE contests for $200, ALEX..."

enough reason for any surfer to participate.

On a slightly smaller yet more elegant scale is the Dream Cruise Sweepstakes, a combined effort of Sterling Vineyards, Mumm Cuvee Napa and Monterey Vineyards. Purchase of wine may not be necessary to win, but it certainly makes it easier; entry into the contest is automatic with a purchase or with membership in a sampling club, other interested parties must send a postcard via snail mail in order to participate. Tantalizing players with a $2,500 trip on Princess Cruise Lines, the sweepstakes entirely forsakes the skill elements found in the trivia contests and relies instead on the luck of the draw. Once again, the odds are a bit steep—only one entry will be selected from all purchases made from the start of the contest until April 24, 1996.

-Justin Ware

Median Income of

Online Users:

$50,000 to $75,000

Netscape's Total Assets

as of December 31, 1994:

$7,158,641

Netscape's Total Assets

as of September 30, 1995:

$204,417,240

Statistics provided by Inteco Corp., Trish Information Services,

The great contest contest

After finding all sorts of legitimate contests, *IU* decided to surf for a different kind of game: competitions undertaken not for potential prizes but procrastination. Here are several of the least lucrative:

The Milwaukee Web Yellow Pages Contest
http://www.myp.com/contest.html
How to win: Register and wait.
Grand Prize: A $5 gift certificate for frozen custard

EXTRA!™ Personal Client Trivia Contest
http://www.attachmate.com/contest
How to win: Answer questions about Attachmate products.
Grand Prize: An Attachmate T-shirt

The Questel/Orbit Strange-But-True Patent Contest
http://www.bedrock.com/patents/sbtpc.html
How to Win: Find a weird patent and submit it.
Grand Prize: Two free hours on a set of Questel/Orbit databases! (exclamation theirs)

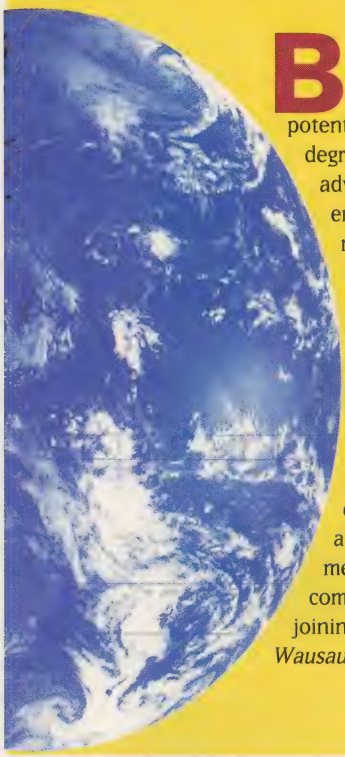
"Be a Winner, Be a Member"
Quick Quiz and Drag Racing Trivia
http://www.dragway.com/arcade/
How to win: Answer questions on drag racing.
Grand Prize: A Lebanon Valley Dragway T-shirt

The "Don't Hate Fido
Because He's Beautiful" Contest
http://www.continuumsi.com/Fido/
How to Win: Redraw a dog.
Grand Prize: Ummmm... recognition

Mixed Media

Making Willard obsolete

In a move to capture those online addicts who haven't seen the light of day since their last system crash, The Weather Channel recently formed an agreement with Time Inc. to create interactive programming for Time Warner's Pathfinder site on the Web, as well as more extensive initiatives for Time Warner's Full Service Network in Orlando. The Pathfinder Weather Center lets visitors check out global forecasts, maps, graphics and other meteorological tidbits impossible to get just by looking out the window. So if you've ever wondered whether or not it's too cold to visit 7-Eleven for Cheetos, now you don't even have to leave your screen—just hyperlink over to http://pathfinder.com.



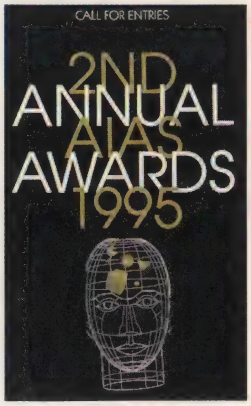
But where's Pravda?

Being Web fluent might not titillate potential employers as much as a master's degree, but being 'net literate does have its advantages. Thanks to a massive confluence of publishing karma, you can now not only use the 'net to procrastinate at your current workplace, you can use it to find another job entirely: the *Boston Globe*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, the *San Jose Mercury News* and *The Washington Post* recently launched CareerPath.com, a compilation of job listings from the papers' classified ads. The new service eventually will fill other gaps in online employment as well, with resume data bases, company profiles, and matching services joining the classifieds. No word on when *The Wausau Daily Herald* will get involved.

Interactive Media Awards

Just don't go with Whoopi

The first annual Interactive Media Awards scored a surprise ratings hit for Turner Broadcasting last fall. The awards show mostly honored achievements in multimedia and CD-ROMs, but this year the competition has been expanded to include online achievement as well, with categories ranging from Best User Interface to Best Online Ad. The Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences hopes to parlay last year's success into further recognition; scheduled for December, the second annual AIAS Awards will try to broaden its audience by landing a name host and a juicy prime-time slot on a major network. Considerations for host include comedians Dennis Miller, Howie Mandel and Sinbad, which would suggest that the AIAS isn't competition for the Oscars quite yet. One suggestion from *IU*—try to get Miller.



Bye, bye MCI, not to mention Sprint and AT&T

Remember when you were 10 years old and couldn't wait to try out those high-tech G.I. Joe plastic walkie-talkies? All powered-up with a couple of 9-volts, you and your best friend ran outside—the neighbor kids looking on jealously—to engage in super-secret conversations that went something like this:

"KKKKKrrrrr.....krrrr....waaa..... (feedback) the fort.....waaaa.....bmmmm. Kkkkkrrrr backyard.... (feedback). Over?"

Up until recently, two-way communications over the 'net hasn't been much better. After about

three minutes of garbled squawking, users run out of things to say, frustrated with waiting for the other person to finish their message before they can speak. Several companies, however, are now trying to bring Internet communications past the realm of walkie-talkies, if not into prime time.

Introduced earlier this year by Vocaltec, the Internet Telephone (IPhone) allows users to talk to other IPhone subscribers in real time over the Internet. Using simple hardware—a high-speed (14.4 or better) modem, a relatively fast computer and a microphone—subscribers are able to make long-distance telephone calls for the price of a local call.

Similar programs for other platforms include Netphone for Mac users and MTalk, a very experimental source for UNIX users. Software ranges from free to about $100.

Despite a warm reception from the online community, however, the long-distance giants aren't exactly cowering in fear over their imminent demise. Fuzzy sound quality, noticeable delays and half-duplex technology (only one person can speak at once) have made Internet telephones more of a novelty than a utility. After all, just because you can call Tokyo for mere pennies doesn't mean you want to.

Dallas-based Camelot Corp., however, recently upped the ante with Digiphone, a product featuring full-duplex capabilities just like a real phone. This advance, combined with IPhone's upcoming upgrade to full duplex, aims to lead the revolution against the long-distance companies. To quote Digiphone's advertising, you will "never pay a slimy red cent for long-distance" again.

"We believe that this is an additional market," says Vocaltec co-founder Lior Haramaty. "We're not necessarily replacing phone conversations. We are talking about something that enables you to do the long conversations that you don't want to do on a regular telephone."

Most IPhone users still lean toward subject-oriented chats, rather than business or personal users. About 500,000 users have downloaded the evaluation version, with the IPhone directory organized by geography as well as chat subjects.

According to Haramaty, however, non-chat users are picking up. "In the early implementation it was a lot of people doing it just for fun, but companies are now using it for meetings. We had one this week to Israel that was two hours—without the cost," he said. Although he declined to name them, Haramaty claims several "large" companies are planning to implement IPhone in the near future as part of their global office communication. "We're doing longer meetings simply because we can," he says.

Families are also an emerging market for Internet audio communication, with multiple computer families becoming more and more common. "This is a cheap, easy way to communicate globally," says Haramaty, who recently used a local telephone line in Asia to listen to his son playing in Israel.

With the potential for thousands, if not millions, of people to use this kind of technology simultaneously, the question of sucking valuable bandwidth is inevitable. The emergence of complex technologies like online video (some users are blending the audio of IPhone with real-time video technology like CUSeeMe for an approximation of videophone), combined with the ever-increasing numbers of e-mail users, has many worried that the Internet may at some point slow

to a trickle or blackout completely. Vocaltec claims its products, including the new full-duplex version allowing speakers to talk in a more natural flow, will not overtax the Internet.

Haramaty explains that IPhone uses only about 10 kilobits per second when the user is speaking, compared to about 24 kps for a Web browser using a 28.8 modem. And getting hooked up to IPhone or Digiphone is much easier than waiting for a harried operator; all you have to do is visit the site and download the software. Who knows—maybe we'll be able to get rid of Candice Bergen after all.

For more information about IPhone, visit their Web site at http://www.vocaltec.com. Digiphone's Web site is at http://www.planeteers.com/index.htm. If you are a Mac user, check out http://www.emagic.com to find out more about NetPhone. -HEATHER IRWIN

Online Service Stop

CompuServe conjures up Internet-only Spryte

Feeling the heat from direct online service providers, CompuServe is launching an Internet-only service, codenamed Spryte, to capture a niche in the casual surfer environment. The base price is $4.95 a month, with three hours free; after that, the service will cost $1.95 per hour.

Spryte's cost, though low for a commercial online service, leans toward the high end in comparison to local providers. Cheaper packages are available for heavier addicts, such as the Gold Internet Club, which costs $19.95 for 20 free hours, but an average of one hour of Internet access per day still runs a subscriber a hefty 40 bucks a month.

CompuServe is counting on name recognition, simplicity, existing networks, software benefits and the emergence of a new online breed, the Internet minimalist, for expansion. "A lot of people don't need the full meal deal — they only need the basics," explains Rebecca Gelinas, CompuServe's Media Relations representative.

The release of Spryte, along with the March launch of their new consumer-oriented commercial service WOW, should allow CompuServe to move beyond its initial venue into more varied areas. "We believe that we can segment the market further," says Gelinas. "We can complement our traditional service with larger offerings for potential users, but in order to expand, we have to help grow the Internet."

6 million strong... but growing?

Research recently conducted by INTECO Corp. reveals that the major commercial online services are experiencing a swell of cancellations and turnover. Though the number of subscribers to America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe, GEnie and Delphi has grown to nearly 5.6 million households, 6.2 million additional users joined services only to cancel soon after signing on. Prodigy took the biggest hit, with 3.5 million households logging off permanently. Genie looks the most at risk, with 372,000 cancellations compared to a mere 46,000 subscribers. A spokesperson for INTECO, a research company, clarified that most cancellations were due to customers shifting from service to service, not forsaking cyberspace entirely.

Good news for Prodigy

On a positive note for cyberspace as a whole, but Prodigy in particular, an agreement between Prodigy and Stratton Oakmont Inc., a small brokerage company in New York, recognizes that online companies haven't always been able to regulate every piece of content on their systems. Although a judge ruled in May against Prodigy, declaring that the online service was liable for slanderous statements made on one of its bulletin boards, Prodigy has since convinced Stratton to back off on their libel case—a joint statement from the two essentially lets the service off the hook, opening the door for a reversal of the ruling.

The tangled business of measuring the web

From remedial text-based home pages to commercial graphics extravaganzas, the Web continues to expand exponentially. Until recently, however, no one has had a handle on how best to measure its growth; attempts to track data have so far been rudimentary, with little success beyond recording the number of hits received in a given time frame. Monitoring clients on an unconnected system like the World Wide Web has proven enormously difficult, mainly because programs and browsers haven't seen tracking as a priority. As more money is invested in the Web, however, advertisers and companies have begun to recognize the importance of decent demographic data, and companies ranging from San Francisco-based I/PRO to Netscape have jumped at the chance to provide more accurate tracking.

Thanks to a snippet of a program in your Netscape folder, more and more 'net transactions are beginning with "give me your cookie." Though infrequently used in the past, cookie technology is becoming more prevalent as Netscape's continued simplification makes the program easier to use and as accurate data becomes crucial. Basically, Cookie technology creates the digital equivalent of an invisible paper trail by allowing site operators to track how often a user accesses their site, explains Leonard Feldman, Netscape's senior product manager.

Although cookie technology can't tell your actual identity (such as John Q. Public), it can "burn" coding similar to an account number onto your individual Netscape program. Invented for the Marketplace MCI project late last year, cookie technology has been used by an increasing number of sites to get a better handle on who's visiting their sites and how often.

Before cookies, curious servers tracked clients mainly by Internet Protocol addresses. Many servers assign a different IP address each time a user logs in, however, making this unreliable, and hit gauges are notoriously sloppy. Cookie technology will pick up some of the slack, but what about those companies that want more extensive information?

That's where Internet Profiles Corporation (I/PRO) comes in. Realizing that current measurement tactics fall far short of what most advertisers or commercial sites require and expect, I/PRO provides data on the number of visitors, the frequency with which they access and locations. I/PRO also takes into consideration the importance of privacy on the 'net: Tina Lin, I/PRO's director of business development explains that I/PRO felt profiles could provide enough demographic information without having to track individuals, so I/PRO reads only a demographic profile provided by the user.

I/PRO's recent alliance with Nielsen Media Research has also given the company credibility among agencies searching for reliable numbers. Nielsen is jointly marketing several of I/PRO's existing products, including I/COUNT and I/AUDIT, and helping to develop new measurement systems. With a client base that includes Netscape, Yahoo and Microsoft, as well as established television advertisers like Chrysler, Playboy and Xerox, the company should grow as a result of the alliance.

"These companies have their measurement models from TV, print and so on," says Lin. "It's only realistic to expect that people from other mediums will expect certain types of information, and having the credibility of someone like Nielsen is critically important."

With current evaluative models so weak, I/PRO's technology, combined with Nielsen's expertise, should allow for more accurate measurement of the Internet. That, in turn, would benefit both advertisers and those sites seeking sponsorship once everyone agrees which sites are getting the most traffic.

'Net measurement may finally be catching up to the needs of businesses jumping onto the Web as the next new frontier. Thorough data doesn't help only companies, however; better evaluations also allows content providers to respond more thoroughly to feedback. "We're just trying to facilitate an exchange of information," Lin says, "but it has to be a win-win situation in order for this to work."

-J.W. and Arnie Katz

Pushing the limits

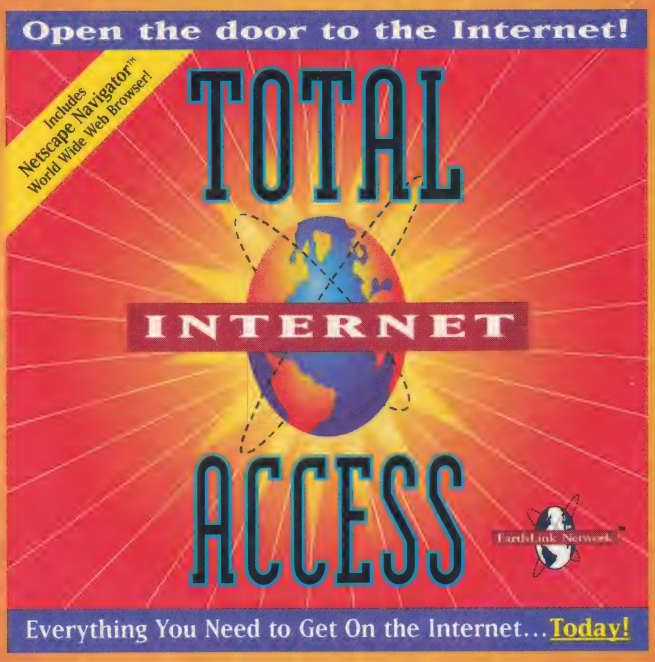
Multi-user gaming on the 'net will go to a whole new level when MGM Interactive and Worlds Inc. introduce *The Outer Limits* game early in 1996. The game will provide a wide selection of digital personas, known as avatars, for players to embody as they interact in the mysterious online world based on MGM's new version of the 1960s classic TV series *The Outer Limits*. In the most expansive attempt ever to have broad-use gaming, *The Outer Limits* will allow up to 5,000 users to play simultaneously and even more after Worlds Inc. comes out with updated software later in 1996. The show's eerie plot lines and bizarre characters ought to make it one of the more surreal interactive activities online. *The Outer Limits* airs on Showtime and in first-run syndication nationwide. Worlds Inc. is a leading producer of networked virtual reality programs that allow many users to interact at onc. Until the game comes out, check out other Worlds Inc. cool stuff and the future of hot apps (such as the freakyWorlds Chat program) at http://www.worlds.net.

Open the Door to THE INTERNET!

"THE SERVICE... A STORY SO FABULOUS IT'LL MAKE YER TAIL SPIN AND LEAVE YOU SINGING HALLELUJAH."

RATED A.

—The Net magazine 9/95



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EarthLink Network™ is proud to announce the release of TotalAccess, a complete software and Internet connection package for Windows, Windows 95 and Macintosh. TotalAccess makes accessing the Internet easier than ever!

TotalAccess includes Netscape Navigator™, award-winning Internet access software, Eudora™, the most popular Internet e-mail software in the world, and everything you need to register for complete Internet access in 5 minutes. Best of all, the software is FREE with your registration! We even include a free 100k home page with your account!

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Netscape Navigator™ is powerful Internet access software. *PC Magazine* "Editor's Choice" award winner.

Eudora E-mail is the most popular Internet e-mail program in the world.

Online help and how-to gives you everything from Internet basics to tips & tricks on finding what you're looking for.

Get TotalAccess right now!

Using your modem, dial into our BBS at 213-644-9291.

PC: Select "TotalAccess for Windows 3.1" or "TotalAccess for Windows 95" and download. From the DOS prompt, run the downloaded file. From Windows, choose Run, click Browse and select the setup.exe file in the same directory as the downloaded file.

MAC: Select "TotalAccess for Macintosh" and download. Double-click the downloaded file. Follow the on-line instructions to install TotalAccess and get started.

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COURT TV CYBERSCHOOL

TO GET A CLOSER LOOK AT INTERNET EDUCATION, *IU* NEWS EDITOR JUSTIN WARE ENROLLED IN A LAW COURSE SPONSORED BY COURT TV. THE COURSE, TAUGHT BY UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LAW PROFESSOR ETHAN KATSH, WAS CONDUCTED VIA E-MAIL, WITH THE SYLLABUS AND READINGS AVAILABLE OVER THE WEB.

If you ever get depressed about your lack of e-mail, enroll in an online course. On a day with a good class discussion (i.e., the O.J. verdict), I found my inbox stuffed with opinions and analysis ranging from defeatist proclamations on race relations to an angry diatribe on judicial control. One thing these debates did make clear was how much the participants in the course varied; though the majority were older than traditional students (the class included one great-grandmother), their backgrounds ranged from bar owners to advertising copywriters to travel agents. Some wanted to be lawyers, some were just self-professed Court TV junkies, while others simply wanted to know how to clear a traffic ticket, though they had to go through Kafka to get there. All participants had a distinct angle on the law, with a wealth of distinct voices stemming from assorted experiences with the legal system. But what about the course itself? Did the class justify the expense? Well, since the expense amounted only to a couple of CDs, it would have been difficult for it not to. And considering the commitment level of the participants, the course more than met my expectations. Certainly, arguments via e-mail lack the heated vigor of a real collegiate environment, but then again, responses were usually well-reasoned, thorough and thought out, all far from a given in most college seminars. No one in the class seemed to be expecting anything more than a chance to hash out legal issues, debate varying philosophies and become better read in legal theory—in short, to become better educated about the laws we live under. If that isn't a perfectly noble use for bandwidth, I don't know what is.

Going to school on the net

Practically every educational institution in the country, if not the world, is looking at the Internet as a conduit to an untapped collection of inquiring minds. As more and more educators explore the fringes of cyberspace, institutions from vocational schools to universities to kindergartens are going online with an eye toward providing convenient, low-cost education. But is online education ever going to be a legitimate alternative to traditional classrooms?

The answer depends on who you ask. Two groups dominate higher education online: the Electronic University Network and the Globewide Network Academy. EUN, a league of colleges, universities and businesses, lets students collect credits or even get degrees by modem. Most online degrees are in business management or administration, though liberal-arts classes are increasingly being offered.

> "Instead of just SCATTERED classes, they (online courses) have REAL curriculums."
>
> Ken Luttrell, public affairs officer of the Department of Education

GNA, a worldwide organization of researchers and schools, is trying to develop new structures to make education more affordable, but at the moment, GNA itself provides only technical and administrative services; member organizations determine their own curricula and choose their own materials.

Colleges offering online classes know that their reputations ride on an ability to maintain high standards. This usually prompts a conservative approach; colleges won't let online ed replace traditional courses unless augmented by in-person studies. Though online student bodies have so far been highly motivated, with most students over 25, employed, and anxious to advance their careers, the student-teacher bond in the end determines the success of learning, so most colleges require some amount of human interaction.

Online classes have several advantages, especially when compared with the other staple of distance learning, correspondence courses. Tuition is generally much cheaper than universities or even community colleges, and motivated college students can acquire degrees from a variety of institutions including the University of California at Berkeley, City University in Los Angeles and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Ken Luttrell, the public affairs officer of the Department of Education, sees online education as a legitimate and growing alternative to in-class studies, especially for older students, "The quality of many of these classes is outstanding," declares Luttrell. "Instead of just scattered classes, they have real curriculums. For example, if I'm an economics teacher at the University of Colorado, I present the classes and then present that same material online. There's no difference in the quality."

For the most part, however, current online education is mostly supplemental, though more and more institutions seem to be providing online classes every term. The best sessions are low-cost, convenient and accredited, and students who are well-motivated and ambitious can probably find a course worth exploring. With increasing numbers of universities and colleges entering cyberspace, online classes are well on their way to becoming a viable option for continued education.

-JOYCE WORLEY

>.IU insider

Hackers Hacked?

It probably shouldn't have come as a surprise to MGM. After all, promoting a dubious cyberthriller called *Hackers* on the Web is like walking into a convention for the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wearing a fur coat. But MGM's *Hackers* page fell prey to a little irony this summer when a scheming hacker (or, as they delineated, a cracker) broke into the site and scribbled yellow eyes and beards onto the graphic posted on the home page. An apology was

Pitchfork Billy Bowen

theoretically written by the hackers, but the release was treated with some skepticism. Many respondents within the hacker community felt that the scribbling was a ploy by the studio. Of course, if it was a ploy, it certainly didn't make much of a difference. Something more than magic markers would have been needed to salvage that computhriller.

Publishing Sinn

What do you do when your political party is banned from TV? You go and get yourself a Web site. Sinn Fein, the political party of the Irish Republican Army, is trying to avoid censorship and communicate with supporters world wide via the Web, Usenet and listservs. Recent concerns that U.S. and U.K. intelligence services have been snooping on the site haven't been confirmed, but Ireland's ground peace right now clearly doesn't apply to the 'net—when the most recent IRA statement concerning the decommissioning of their weapons stockpile was cross-posted to Soc.Culture.British from Soc.Culture.Irish, a flame war of epic proportions ensued. As President Clinton gets ready for the time-honored presidential tradition of Irish root finding, things are likely to heat up further in the stalled peace process; if you want to hear a point of view seldom expressed in the mainstream media, point your browsers to http://www.ma.utexas.edu/users/fodea/aprn/SFhome.html for the Sinn Fein home page and http://www.ma.utexas.edu/users/fodea/aprn/current/news/index.html for the weekly Irish Republican newspaper in its online form.

Nothing for Bill Gates, Either

We checked out the Microsoft Network's reference shelf and typed in the words "Internet" and "World Wide Web" to see what kind of info MSN provided on the topic. Much to our surprise, no references came up for either, even though it searched their entire collection of dictionaries and encyclopedias. Maybe we should have checked on America Online.

Book-Bagging Brits Nipped by the 'Net

After everything that's happened to the British Royal Family over the past few years (mass separations, divorces, toe-sucking fetishism), it came as bit of a surprise when the British establishment pounced on *The Housekeeper's Diary* by Wendy Berry as an object for censorship this fall. The ban garnered a lot of attention, as suppression usually does—the book sold out in New York within days of its publication solely on the strap line "Banned in Britain" added to the cover. But dirt never strays too far from home. Even if the book didn't make it onto British newsstands, the gossip slack was quickly picked up by the Internet. The magazine *Scallywag* (which was once sued for libel for claiming that John Major was having an affair with his caterer) published its spin on the tale via its Web site http://www.demon.co.uk/xyz/Scallywag/index.html and various U.K. newsgroups. *Scallywag* claims that "Diana felt that Buckingham Palace faced an immediate epidemic of AIDS," supposedly because Prince Andrew (the Queen's favorite son) was HIV-positive. The magazine went on to say that Fergie took two AIDS tests herself after finding her husband in bed with another navy chap named Lt. Cox. Are any of the stories true? Obviously, no one knows for sure, but Brits were nervous enough about the rumors to ban the book outright. Now if they could only censor the Internet...

GOT ANY DIRT? SEND IT ALONG TO THE IU INSIDER AT IU@MCS.NET.

'net nomenclature:
Little snippets of slang

Chain Gang: A group of friends on the Web who have links only to each other.

Q-Tip: The snippet of video that appears after you've gotten bored 10 seconds into downloading a Quicktime movie and hit stop.

Nomepage: A home page with nothing there—a picture of a cat, maybe a link or two, but, in general, a cold, isolated pit stop (named in homage to the town in Alaska).

Upholstery: Pointless graphics that do nothing of importance other than needlessly slow the download.

Spanking the 'net: The act of surfing the Internet only to look for sex sites and naughty GIFs.

Annie: Used to describe a site that hasn't been updated in so long it seems abandoned.

do we really need to know?

Dirty Laundry

The Men's UnderWWWear Survey
http://www.execpc.com/~pdemarco/warning.html

Until reading this survey, the most thought we ever gave to our undergarments was rather basic. "Are they clean, so in case I get hit by a wayward bus, I will not be embarrassed, as my mother warned?" After reading this survey, we shuddered at such naive notions. As the following select answers show, underwear seems to be an integral part of many people's lives. We've reprinted only parts of the survey, maintained by BoxerGuy95@aol.com. The rest of it you'll have to explore yourself. Let's just say it gets a bit dirty.

Respondents: 755

How old are you?

Under 10.....0
11-15.....13
16-20.....65
21-25.....136
26-30.....156
31-35.....143
36-40.....90
41-45.....76
46-50.....45
51-55.....32
56-60.....3
61-65.....3
66-70.....0
Over 70...3

What style of underwear are you wearing right now?

None.....91
Full-cut boxers.....73
Trim-cut boxers.....38
Flannel boxers.....21
Silk boxers.....8
Gripper (snap front) boxers.....6
Yoke style boxers.....1
French (side ties) boxers.....1
Boxer briefs (sport boxers).....77
Classic white briefs.....186
Fashion color briefs.....53
Silk briefs.....4
Bikini briefs.....76
Pouch-style briefs.....35
Mesh briefs.....5
Sock-style briefs.....3

Thong.....28
Jockstrap.....50
Union suit.....2
Womens panties.....9
Other style.....5

Has anyone had an influence on your choice of underwear styles? Who? (check all that apply)

No one has influenced me.....225
Male friend.....290
Brother or male relative.....40
Father.....44
Female Friend.....46
Sister or female relative.....6
Mother.....51
Wife or female lover.....64
Husband or male lover.....177
TV, movies or advertising.....282

Have you ever had sex with a partner while wearing or using underwear?

No..... 175
Started out wearing underwear..... 497
Asked partner to wear underwear..... 168
Wore underwear throughout..... 218
Underwear ripped off during..... 276
Like for partner to wear..... 206
Like to wear myself..... 190

Have you ever worn or let your underwear show in public on purpose?

Don't wear underwear..... 13
No..... 341
Occassionally..... 347
Often..... 39
Most of the time..... 12

Have you ever bought, borrowed or stolen anyone's used underwear? (check all that apply)

No..... 320
Yes (with permission)..... 157
Yes (without permission)..... 308
Have traded with others..... 111
Have bought clean used underwear..... 26
Have bought dirty used underwear..... 14

How would you characterize your feelings about men's underwear? (check all that apply)

Don't wear it, don't like it..... 15
Wear it for hygienic reasons..... 158
Put on the first pair I grab..... 109
Mood determines what I wear..... 471
Activity determines choice..... 413
Love to model my underwear..... 166
Men's underwear is sexy..... 485
I check out underwear lines..... 297
I buy underwear as gifts..... 77
Loiter in underwear department 194
I have a strong underwear fetish..... 121

Comments from survey takers:

"Good underwear is like fine wine, the look and feel of each type and material is to be savored. Three cheers for Lycra and Lycra and cotton blends. Would encourage a similar survey on swim wear preferences."

"What about having a waist band test. Show designs and patterns, see how many people can detect brands."

"This is weird."

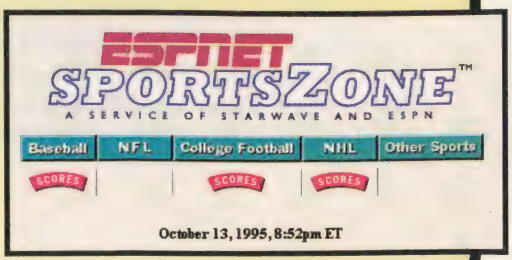
is it worth it?

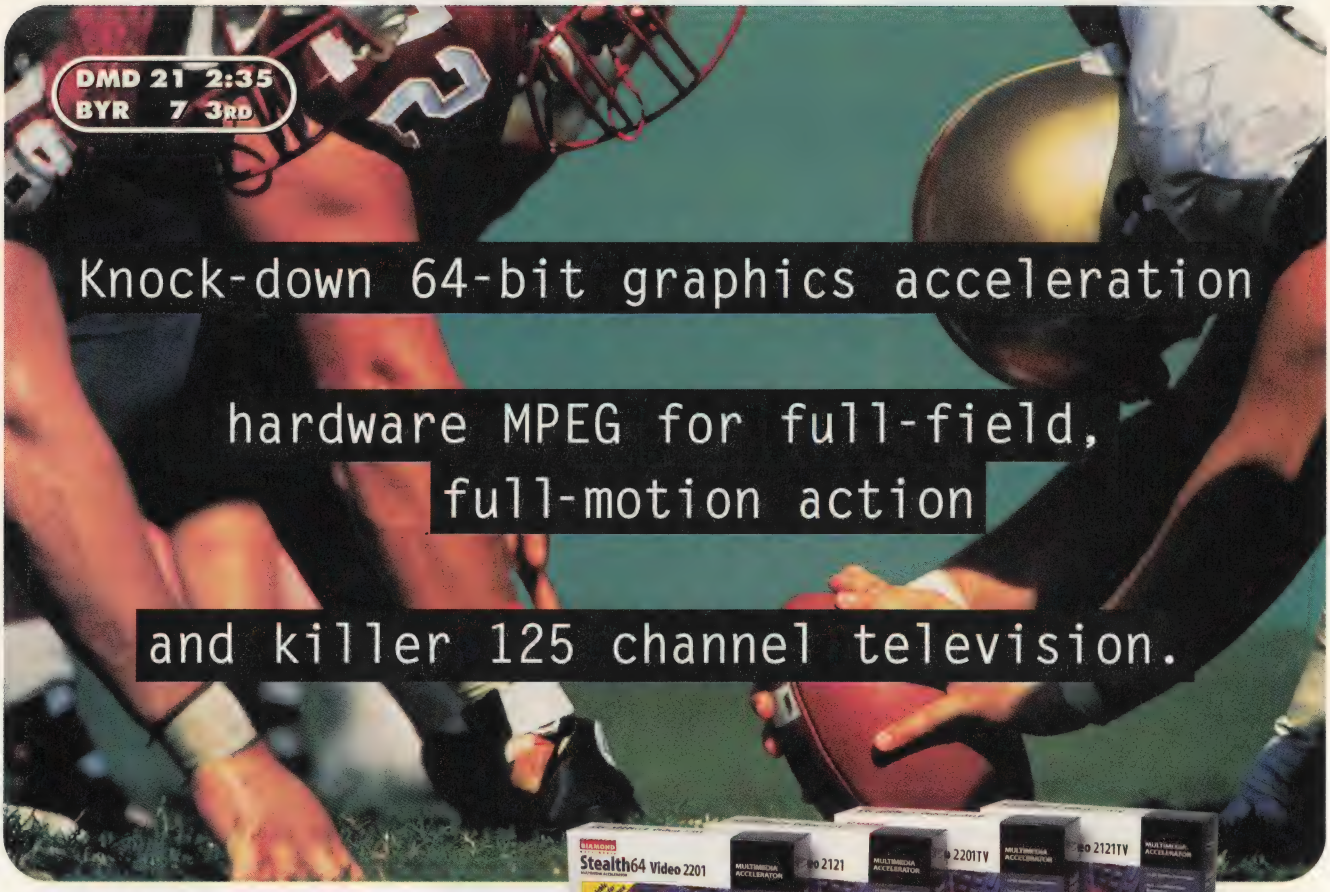
With sites increasingly requesting that Internet surfers fork over some cash or credit before entering, *IU* decided to check out a site each month, pay the entry fee, and then let our readers know whether it's truly worth the price of admission.

Pay before play: ESPNET SportsZone

ESPNET SportsZone, one of the most popular sites on the 'net, recently added a series of subscriber-only features to their sports coverage, offering those willing to fork out a $4.95 monthly subscription fee a slew of additional statistics, RealAudio clips, GIFs and wisdom from columnists. The additional elements cover an amazing range: from NFL drive charts to Major League Baseball profiles; incisive debates on the significance of sports to impressively vapid chat room banter; the Sportscenter theme on RealAudio to in-depth coverage of Big 10 hockey teams. The subscriber features are certainly thorough, but are they worth the cost?

The answer largely depends on your relationship to the athletic world. If every node of your lymphatic system sweats statistics and athletic analysis, then the monthly fee may be justified as SportsZone seems one of the most comprehensive services around. The columns are solid, the multimedia extensive (though often bolstered by fluff) and the games dissected to the point that even the most diehard fanatic will feel inundated. For most Web surfers, however, the free features and stats provided by SportsZone should easily satisfy. Though, we must say, ESPNET deserves accolades for keeping the free portions as up-to-date and interesting as their money-making counterpart.





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Max resolution:	1280 x 1024
Bus type:	PCI
Optional hardware:	▪ MPEG Video Player 1100 daughtercard ▪ DTV 1100 TV tuner card — **2121, 2201**
Software:	▪ Video for Windows DCI Support ▪ Software MPEG playback for Windows® 95 and Windows® 3.1

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Some models available in VLB.

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weird on the web

The Nipple Server
http://www.thoughtport.com/spinnwebe/nipple.html

"Go the next one. Man, this is weird. Let's see another."

The staff was huddled around one monitor, flipping through the archives of Greg's Nipple Server. Scores of photographs of a guy's nipple. His left nipple. Pink, unassuming and utterly unremarkable, we could only wonder: Why is this on the Web?

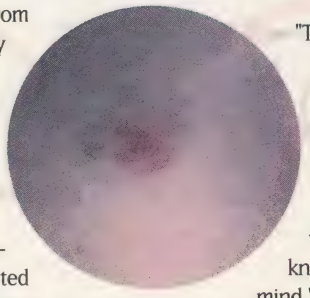
We spoke with Greg Galcik, the site's creator and possessor of the nipple. He admits that he developed it with the goal of getting on the Useless Pages to generate exposure for his larger site, SpinnWebe.

Galcik awakens each morning and takes a photograph of his nipple with a QuickTake digital camera.

"Viewers vote on the nipple's perkiness, panache, and overall nipplish quality."

– NIPPLE SERVER

The nipple looks the same from day to day, although lately Galcik has experimented with shooting from different angles and in varying areas of his house. Early nipples were often blurry, it seems Greg's photography improved with experience, as the shots are usually clear now. Viewers are invited to rank each shot on its "perkiness, panache, and overall nipplish quality."



Galcik works for Point Communications surfing the net and reviewing sites. His site, SpinnWebe (German for spiderweb), is a great collection of bizarre links and interactive activities. SpinnWebe is host to The Magic 9-Ball and 1-900-ZWEBLO7 and one version of "The Dysfunctional Family Circus."

Of his own family, he told his parents about the site "as a preemptive strike," in case his Web-surfing mother stumbled across it. His newlywed bride, Debb, "initially felt alarm, and thought it was weird, but she's knows what I'm like and doesn't mind." His in-laws are another story. Galcik feels sure that they know, but all parties are loathe to bring it up.

His e-mail response has been generally favorable. Sometimes people write in to suggest that Galcik lose weight, which hurts his feelings. He rarely gets lustful e-mail. "But I did get a weird letter once. This person from Australia, I couldn't tell if it was a man or a woman, wrote that they wanted to suck and fondle my nipple for hours. I wrote back to say that if they wanted to pay for my airfare to Australia, that would be okay. Because I would like to see Australia."

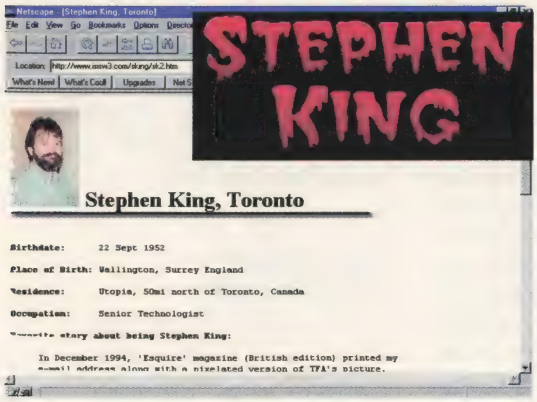
Debbies Do the Web
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~darmstro/deb/deb.html

Web demographics might be overwhelmingly male, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a page devoted to Steves, Dons, or Bills. Debbie Armstrong-Bose, however, has hotlisted all the Debs throughout cyberspace, from Little Debbie Snacks to Tropical Storm Debby to random individuals with nothing of importance except name association. Some are better than others (Debbie Mancini even offers to help find you a job) but almost all are worth a look, except, of course, for the Debbie Gibson Fan Page -- being named Debbie doesn't excuse everything.

The Stephen Kings' Page
http://www.isisw3.com/sking/

Here is a collection of tales of terror from ordinary guys cursed with the name Stephen King. They live, as the site notes, "defined by who we are not." These hapless Stephens find themselves hounded for autographs, e-mailed by misguided fans and questioned at international borders. Each one is forced to confront his identity each time he's faced with the unavoidable question, "Are you the real Stephen King?" The collective responds: "This question suffers from being way too existential."

The Stephens refer to that other Stephen King as "TFA"—The Famous Author. Most 'net-surfers seem to find



the page by searching for TFA, and the guest book is littered with people talking about *Christine* and *The Dark Tower*. It seems some people can't catch a clue. Oh, the horror.

Stephen Turner's Coldlist

http://www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~sret1/coldlist.html

A triumph of the Web at its most useless, Stephen Turner's Coldlist offers links to sites of, in his words, "Very little interest to almost everybody." Blessed with no subtext, none of that pesky editorializing and a refreshing lack of attractive graphics, the Coldlist provides no reason for a visit except to discover what some poor sucker at the Finnish Soccer League spent time uploading.

Church of Euthanasia

http://www.paranoia.com/coe/

According to their home page, the Church of Euthanasia was inspired by a dream in which the founder, the Rev. Korda, was confronted by an alien intelligence known only as The Being who spoke of a certain doom for the planet. Korda pulled himself out of bed moaning the church's now infamous slogan, "Save the Planet—Kill Yourself."

Evidentally, his followers did not take him too seriously, as there are still plenty around to contribute to this rather enormous site which explains the church's pillars of suicide, abortion, cannibalism and sodomy. Though mostly text, the site offers many bizarre academic instructions, such as how to cut a human being for cannibalism. Worth looking up are the impressive list of startling, unattributed facts about vegetarianism and overpopulation, and the first-ever Suicide Assistance Hotline. The church also has a mailing list, from majordomo@net.com. In the body of the message, type subscribe snuffit-L.

EVERY SO OFTEN, the *IU* staff comes across a Web site we'd like to share with our readers that might be in BAD TASTE or a SHOCK to our gentler readers. So for the enter@your own risk* DARING and not too EASILY OFFENDED, check out

http://www.io.com/~nightime/bodies.html

– a page that offers a whole new meaning to the phrase "body shop." REMEMBER, we warned you...

kook du jour

Harold Camping,

president of Radio Radio.
At http://www.infonet.net/showcase/famradio/aids.htm

Camping explains why he believes that AIDS is a curse meant to eradicate homosexuals everywhere. He backs up this belief with scripture, noting that a harsh judgment will come to those who abandon "the natural use of the woman" (Romans 1:26, 27). One thing that Camping does not explain through scripture is why a growing number of heterosexuals, including children, contract the disease; though Camping refers to AIDS as a direct curse to homosexuality, which he calls "a very clear-cut sin." Camping feels compelled to spread his word because "We're so close to the end of the world" and therefore, Judgment Day, of course. Hit a hyperlink at the end of his message to find out how you can be born again.

The Shrine of Bazooka Joe

http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~joe/bazooka_html/

Celebrating one of America's unsung comic heroes in the Shrine of Bazooka Joe, this site breaks down 50 Bazooka comics, cataloging them into chapters and themes such as "Bazooka Joe as a poor role model." Each comic is deconstructed with critical commentary examining the socioeconomic implications of the subliminal messages offered by each simple strip. All this plus a new fortune every time you visit!

Shamanistic Healing-Energies on the Internet

http://www.prgone.com/bus/dpedro/

Feeling a little down? Experiencing angst and guilt after downloading all those erotica binaries? Perhaps Don Pedro can help you out. Able to transmit healing vibes over phone lines, Pedro tells you to sit in front of the screen at very specific times of the day, extending your left arm until you feel heat and a tickling sensation that normally comes only from coffee. Atheists and Agnostics are welcome, providing, of course, that you don't mind staring for 10 minutes at a portrait of Jesus.

The Internet Crime Archives

http://underground.net/Art/Crime/archives.html

"They did it, they liked it, they did it again!" That's the slogan for this site, which offers more information than any reasonable person would want to know about the most prominent serial killers, mass murderers and deadly cult leaders throughout history. Knowing what misdeeds occurred at the hands of these men made us a little uncomfortable, especially when they seem to be almost heralded for their efforts. But we must admit, the site is rather exhaustive. You'll find profiles of Richard Speck, The Green River Killer and Marc Levine, "who liked guns but hated women." You can also go step-by-step through a mass murder in a convenience store. Within this site, there's a link to an awful page with multiple photos of a dismembered part of the male anatomy. There's a disturbing graphic portrait of David Koresh in an almost-Messiah like scene. In the same area, "Killer Cults," you'll find a detailed biography of the Rev. Jim Jones of Jonestown fame.

Snow Globe of the Month

http://www.webcom.com/~foxstu/snow.html

Collections on the Web range from the awe-inspiring art of the Louvre to the nap-inspiring CDs of a sophomore at Hofstra. Falling somewhere between these two extremes are the snow globes of the Fox Studios, a photo and design studio in Minneapolis. Their Snow Globe of the Month site includes snowy reminders from an eclectic assortment of destinations ranging from Paris to the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in Hayward, Wisc. Each globe has been lushly captured in a static state (sorry no Quick Time video clips of the globes being shaken), and is accompanied by an engaging travelogue.

Non Mattel Plastic Princes

http://d.armory.com/~zenugirl/gaybilly.html

Pity poor Ken. Despite his all-American good looks and well-sculpted plastic torso, he's been the whipping boy of the doll market for years thanks to his lack of a certain male appendage and speculation that he's been secretly trying on Barbie's clothes. If you want a doll with a little more meat who isn't afraid to face his sexuality head-on, try Billy, the first Out and Proud Gay Doll. Billy, available for $245 (that's not a typo) comes with 12 stunning outfits and is "heroically endowed," something this site stresses time and again.

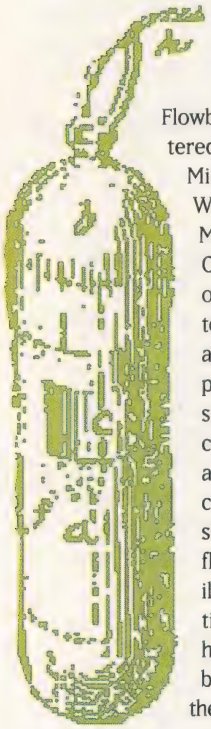
"Place your left hand near or directly toward the screen..."

-DON PEDRO, SHAMANSTIC HEALING ENERGIES

Wacky Patent of the Month

http://colitz.com/site/wacky.htm

With more than 100,000 patents awarded annually by the U.S. Patent Office, not every invention can be the light bulb, combustion engine or even the Flowbee. That's where registered patent attorney Michael J. Colitz, Jr.'s Wacky Patent of the Month comes into play. Colitz is "devoted to recognizing selected inventors and their remarkable and unconventional patented inventions" such as the stomach-churning tapeworm trap and the combined grocer's package, grater, slicer and mouse- and fly-trap. Replete with full illustrations and exhaustive descriptions, one hopes Colitz will expand beyond the pest trap theme



Charlie's Sneaker Pages

http://www.neosoft.com/~sneakers/

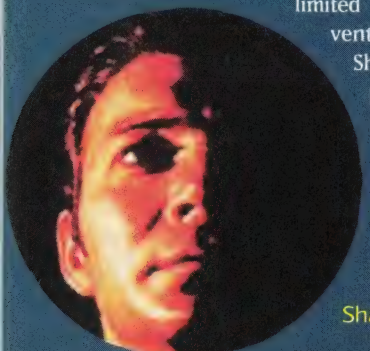
Sneaker freak Charlie decided it was really important that the world get a chance to gaze at the splendor of his accumulated sneaker wisdom. With an apparent affection for Converse Chuck Taylors yet still brand fickle, Charlie shows off his collection of sports-oriented footwear with his own photos to spotlight individual sneaker brands, then discusses their superiority over other products. His home page tells us that Charlie works for Boeing as a software designer for the International Space Station. Charlie, that prankster, even links to a page that tells you how Boeing's common stock performs. So helpful, that Charlie.

classic weird on the web

The Capt. James T. Kirk Sing-Along Page

http://www.ama.caltech.edu/~mrm/kirk.html

We thought his overly earnest soliloquies were bad enough. Then we found the evidence of William Shatner's participation in a dark, disturbing fad of the late 1960s in which celebrities with talents that barely accommodated limited TV roles decided to venture onto vinyl. In Shatner's case, this proved to be more embarrassing than any of his "realistic" hair pieces. This site, established by students at the California Institute of Technology, offers downloads of songs from Shatner's pathetically amusing 1968 album, *A Transformed Man.*

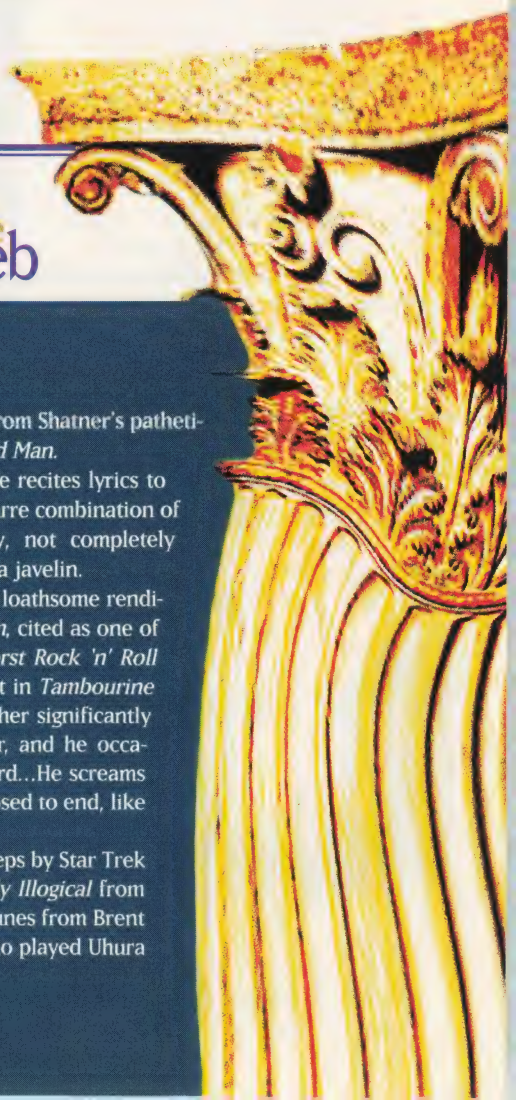


Shatner, too earnest for words, tried "music" in 1968

Put simply, he's out of control as he recites lyrics to "Lucy In the Sky with Diamonds" in a bizarre combination of breathy beatnik and screaming lunacy, not completely unlike Wayne Newton being impaled by a javelin.

But the true gem here is the patently loathsome rendition of Bob Dylan's *Mr. Tambourine Man,* cited as one of the worst Dylan covers ever in *The Worst Rock 'n' Roll Records of All Time.* The book notes that in *Tambourine Man* Shatner "invests each line with either significantly more or less emotion than is called for, and he occasionally puts emphasis on the wrong word...He screams louder and louder after the song is supposed to end, like a kid running after an ice cream truck."

This site also links to other vocal missteps by Star Trek crew members, including the tune *Highly Illogical* from Leonard Nimoy's *The Way I Feel,* sappy tunes from Brent Spiner aka Data and Nichelle Nichols, who played Uhura in the original series.



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Netsite: \\Web_pages.we're_glad_we\can't.find!

What's New! | What's Cool! | Upgrades | Net Search | Net Directory | Newsgroups | Handbook

WELCOME TO "THE FAILED BARBIE HOME PAGE"

Ever since Barbie made her heralded debut as the standard for modern female beauty (despite being a anatomical anomaly) the good folks at Mattel have attempted to keep her look up-to-date with "special" editions of Barbie to capture untapped parts of the plastic doll market. However, not every marketing concept, no matter how seemingly brilliant or artfully conceived, makes it in the cold, fickle world of consumerism. Sometimes even shining examples of well-intentioned, yet horribly off-the-mark strategic savvy fall by the wayside. Surely, that must happen to Barbie, too–even her world isn't perfect. Such masterpieces of design should not be lost, even if they will never find a market. We've collected them here.

GENETIC MUTATION BARBIE

Even if you've got an extra limb, you don't have to be unfashionable; you just need more closet space! With limbs that detach and reattach to different parts of Barbie's anatomy, this special edition comes with the Chemical Experiment Gone Horribly Wrong Play set.

WORKING GIRL BARBIE

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KEN WANTS TO BE BARBIE BARBIE

Ed Wood put it best: "I like wearing women's clothing. It just makes me feel comfortable." Ken knows how Ed feels. He's seen *Glen or Glenda* at least a dozen times. So let Ken get in touch with his female side with a whole special line of wardrobe and accessories, including angora sweaters, extra-large pumps, leather pants and Judy Garland portraits. Also available: Don't Ask, Don't Tell G.I. Joe.

MICHIGAN MILITIA BARBIE

A Barbie with a cause! Special talking Barbie denies her involvement in the Oklahoma Bombing and espouses her desire for less government control! Comes with pink Dream Ryder Truck. Special accessories include pre-1994-ban assault weapons and special NRA card!

RADIOACTIVE BARBIE

She's hot –literally! This Barbie comes ready to deal with the aftermath of any nuclear crisis. Demonstrating to young girls that it's always good to take precautions when dealing with especially dense, dangerous atomic chemicals! To use with Barbie's Dream Reactor set.

HIT THESE LINKS to see other failed Barbie concepts:

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Methadone Clinic Barbie

Bounced Check Barbie

Operation Rescue Barbie

Ken Kesey
(comes with electric Kool-Aid Acid Bus)

Jailbait Skipper

Hairy Back Ken

Body Piercing Barbie
(with regenerating flesh)

That Awkward Age Skipper
(with braces, bad skin and poor self-esteem)

*Stuff our lawyers said we had to say about this page: Barbie, Ken and Skipper are registered trademarks of the Mattel, Inc. Obviously, none of these concepts were neither conceived nor approved by Mattel in any way. We like Barbie, we do. This is just a parody, and only a parody. If these were real Barbie concepts, you'd be beating a path to the nearest Toys 'R' Us to buy them, right? Come to think of it, all this stuff applies for G.I. Joe and his makers at Hasbro, Inc., too.

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TWO HACKERS FOUND CRACKS AT NETSCAPE AND BUSTED THE ISSUE OF 'NET SECURITY WIDE OPEN

The BUG Heard Around the WORLD

Not since the killer bee has a bug caused as much alarm as the one David Wagner and Ian Goldberg discovered last fall.

Acting on an educated hunch, the two University of California at Berkeley grad students found and exploited a weakness in Netscape Navigator web browser that allowed them to crack supposedly secure documents. Rather than exploit the flaw, the pair immediately took their findings and posted them on the Internet. By the next day, the story of the bug had made *The New York Times,* CNN and just about every other forum that carries news about the online world. Barely three weeks later, Wagner and Goldberg were in the news again, when they brought to public attention an obscure security fault in the backbone of the Internet itself. Up until that point, most people took it for granted that Internet security was under control enough to allow the mass orgy of online commerce for which businesses are gearing up.

Now, the very bedrock of the new frontier is suspect. "Security is a subjective process," says Jeff Treuhaft, security product manager at Netscape Communications. "We have understood all along that there is no such thing as 100 percent Internet security. There never will be." Marty Levine, the editor of the Digital Technology Report and an industry analyst, concurs: "With any security scheme, it's a matter of when, not if, security will be broken. The break-in only reinforces the perception that there is no total security on the Internet."

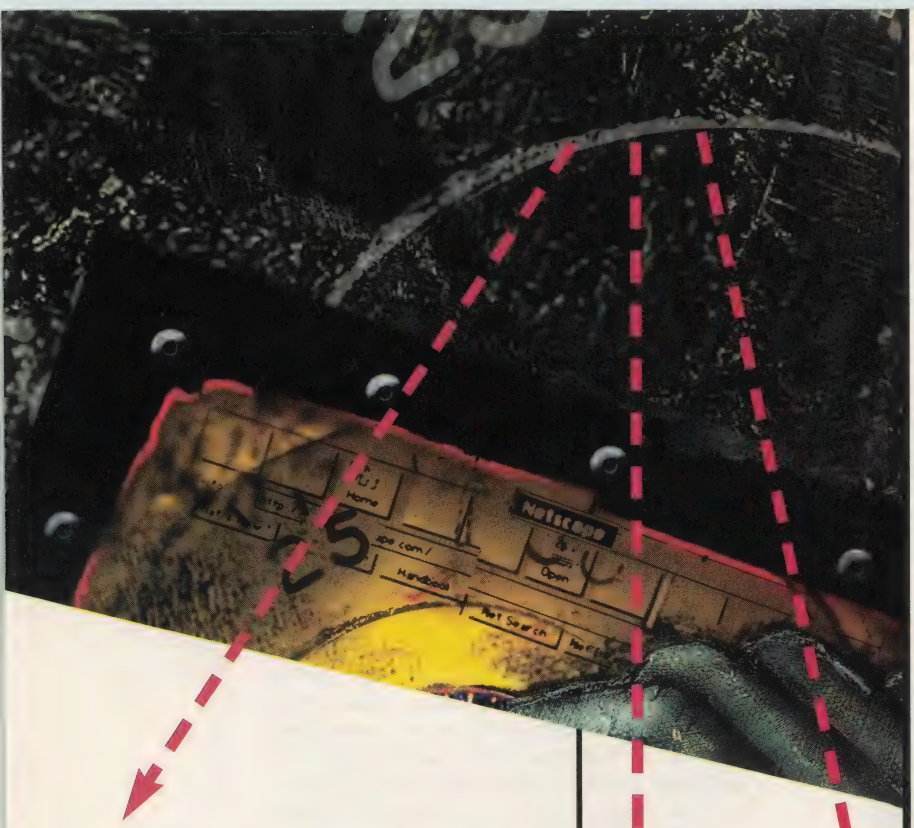
Good Story, Bad Press

If many people already knew that Internet security is an illusion at best, why did Wagner and Goldbergs' findings generate the uproar that they did? Part of the answer lies in the financial pages. Last August, Netscape made its initial public stock offering. The stock was expected to open at $28 a share; it immediately skyrocketed to almost three times that much, before settling down to around a still astonishing $58 a share. For a few dizzying minutes, Netscape—a company that had an income of $16 million the previous fiscal year—was valued at $2.7 billion.

Thus, the Netscape browser security flap in September came as a wake-up call to many of the companies who saw Netscape's stock success as a green light to set up shop in cyberspace. Netscape's Treuhaft feels that while the media coverage of the flaws made many people think about Internet security for the first time, it shouldn't have come as a shock to anyone. "I'm not sure who it has been a bombshell for. We were surprised at

BY JOHN WESLEY HARDIN

Rich Borge/Gravity Workshop



the sensationalism of the story," he says. "I think the press especially has taken a keen interest in the story and taken some editorial liberties in how they portray the problems."

Treuhaft is especially upset with the way that the second security story played in the press. "That second security break was not really new. What (Wagner and Goldberg) described was the ability within a network to change a program that a user was downloading, while it was being downloaded. They weren't changing the file on disk somewhere, they were changing it as it crossed the network." The problem, Treuhaft says, is the media's misconception that this was a new, unknown bug a pair of hackers had somehow discovered. "Anyone with an interest in the Internet could have easily found this information in literally dozens, if not hundreds, of places. It's been generally known for quite some time. All that (Wagner and Goldberg) were trying to do was raise awareness."

Wagner and Goldberg posted their findings to the Web because they said that they hoped it would be for the public's good to draw attention to Internet security. Treuhaft agrees. "Folks like (Wagner and Goldberg) and many before them have taken the Netscape program and put it through its paces to help us make it a better product. In that sense, their efforts are definitely in the interest of Netscape and the interest of all the users out there who enjoy using the product."

The break in should actually increase confidence in Netscape's security, Treuhaft maintains, because "consumers realize some of these very bright people have spent many hours attacking the program, and the flaws they found have all been fixed."

Netscape's position is that the browser security break, though important, was not a major setback for the company. "The stock prices continue to go up, so I think that may be indicative of something" says Treuhaft. "In general the investor community are smart people. They aren't swayed by news stories and they aren't swayed by Web postings, and they all understood that Netscape wasn't the first company to deliver security solutions for the Internet; Netscape was not the first company to have bugs in their software and certainly won't be the last."

Beating a Dead Bolt

Mike Homer, Netscape's vice president of marketing, likens current security measures on the Internet to a deadbolt lock. "It's a good solution for protecting certain valuables. Now if you put a couple million bucks behind that door with the deadbolt on it, somebody's probably going to figure out how to get in. That's why they have bank vaults. It's important that your security matches the value of the information you're protecting." In other words, if you're transmitting your credit card number, Netscape's security should provide plenty of protection. "But," says Homer, "people aren't passing around their Swiss bank account numbers, either."

Treuhaft continues the analogy. "You don't really put a deadbolt between your kitchen and your bedroom. You trust if someone is going to be in your house, they're not going to go into your sock drawer to steal your wallet. There are spheres of influence where you make decisions and manage risk and it's an ongoing process to decide where to put the deadbolts, who to trust and how to build your network."

As Levine succintly put it: "You can minimize security breaches, but you can't eliminate them."

When one stops to think about it, it seems a little unreasonable to expect complete security on the Internet, when complete security doesn't exist in the physical world: Banks get robbed and credit card numbers get stolen. The Internet is no different. Just like in any business, security on the Internet is about assessing risk and covering the important bases. "You've got a good example in the security that is put on a lot of jewelry stores with all the alarms and cameras and that stuff," says Treuhaft. "You walk into your local McDonald's, you know, there's no (apparent) alarms, no (apparent) cameras, and I bet there's more cash flowing through a McDonald's these days than flowing through jewelry stores."

What could make the 'net even more secure? Larger encryption keys along with the widespread advent of crypto programs like Pretty Good Privacy, would make things more comfortable to anybody with security interests on the Web. Only one little obstacle is keeping those things away from users worldwide: The U.S. Government.

Ahhh, Sweet Bureaucracy

Under current government policy, strong cryptography is classified as a "munition" in accordance with the International Trade in Arms Regulations. That means that Pretty Good Privacy and the domestic Netscape Navigator are in the same league as tanks, military aircraft and nerve gas, at least as far as exporting them goes. Uncle Sam tends to frown upon private citizens who deal in munitions, and while you may not be able to send a tank via e-mail, you can easily export a three-line munitions system (see sidebar).

"That's the lasting issue in this whole over-hyped story" says Treuhaft. "The biggest thing we still have to resolve is how U.S. companies can compete against foreign companies with the current export restrictions." Successful cryptography relies on encryption keys. Basically, the larger the key, the harder it is to crack the encryption of a given piece of software. Today, Netscape is limited to exporting its product with 40-bit keys. Domestic versions of the browser have a 128-bit key, but are not available online.

"We can't distribute any of our strong crypto products via the Internet" says Treuhaft. "Not even our 128-bit key domestic browser; we can't distribute that to our U.S. customers via the Internet. We're limited by the government from doing that, because if it's on the Internet, anyone (outside the United States) can download it."

The consensus among Web security mavens is that the rules themselves aren't bad, just badly out of date. Treuhaft explains: "Three-and a-half years ago the (Software Publishers Association) and the government entered into an agreement that basically set the 40-bit key limit that we're living with today. The agreement that they came to also stipulated that they would meet on a regular basis and review that key size, and that's never happened."

Depressingly typical bureaucracy, it would seem. Several companies are currently involved in lobbying the government to change the rules, but so far their efforts have resulted in very little success. "What we're hoping for at this point is to set up an ongoing review of the export requirements" says Treuhaft.

In an industry that changes as fast as the Internet, rules that are three years old seem archaic, just more proof that the 'net changes faster than governments can keep up. If we don't want to get left in the dust, the United States needs to review these exports soon, or else, "it's going to be a joke, compared to what the rest of the world will be able to do in terms of developing competitive products," Treuhaft says.

Another Bug Hunt

These weren't the first bugs and they won't be the last bugs to be found in prominent Internet software. According to Netscape, Wagner and Goldberg's discovery was the first time such a large problem was ever discovered by users, or at least no customers have ever come forth with a complaint.

To bolster public confidence, Netscape is putting in place a series of internal and external reviews of their software. They also announced that they would now be showing their source code to security experts on the Internet. In the past, Netscape has been harshly criticized for refusing to let outside experts review their product source codes.

Even with all the changes, they don't expect to please everybody. "There's no way for Netscape as a company to ever get to the point where 100 percent of the people out there think our solutions are secure enough," says Treuhaft. "There will always be a group of people out there who think they find problems, or feel religiously that we solved it the wrong way." Treuhaft maintains that the only thing anyone can do for security is make the best possible effort to take a close look at system design and get a consensus from as large a group of experts as possible.

Treuhaft believes that, even if Wagner and Goldberg had not gone public with their bug, Netscape would have implemented the same changes. "We would have, eventually. It's hard

to say we would have done it on the same time frame. We had some of these ideas in several different levels of planning stage. The company was headed in that general direction."

After they implemented the changes, Netscape took a further step and began actively encouraging 'netheads to look for bugs in the beta version of Netscape Navigator 2.0. Releasing software for the purposes of informal beta testing is a tradition online, explains Treuhaft. "The basic thinking was, 'people are going to do this anyway, so if we give them a little incentive, maybe they'll do it better.'"

Netscape Navigator 2.0 users who find and report serious security flaws can win $1,000, while lesser bugs will earn them a Netscape coffee mug or T-shirt, as part of Netscape's Bugs Bounty contest (see sidebar this section).

Was the Bugs Bounty idea taken from the independent Hack Netscape contest? Sameer Parekh wonders. Parekh, president of Community ConneXion, a San Franciso-based Internet provider and privacy service, set up the Hack Netscape page. "I suppose there's really no way to know, because Netscape probably wouldn't admit it." Treuhaft responds "the Bugs Bounty is actually something we've thought about for a while. In many cases, there are key features we wanted to test, and we were interested in getting quality testers. It seemed like incentive was a good way to do that. That's not to say that we expect everyone of our testers to only do it if they get paid. There will continue to be those people who do it simply because they like the product."

Of course, it's important to remember that none of these precautions mean anything to someone who is determined to break into systems or software. "There are very talented people out there" explains Levine, "and if you put enough computing power together with enough talent, any system can be broken. You can probably design a system that's almost unbreakable, but only almost."

The problems of Internet security seem clear enough, but what are some of the solutions? The government may eventually get around to raising key sizes, but vital information has to go over the 'net before then. One potential solution can be found in the example of QVC or other home shopping channels. Users of those services are given a personal ID number to use in transactions, eliminating the exchange of credit card numbers altogether. "Credit card transactions have proven effective in other areas," says Levine. "If they are unworkable on the 'net, other solutions will be found." Electronic cash, a system were consumers would pre-pay in order to have an online credit line, is another alternative; some say it will be the ether's killer app, but is still too undeveloped now to be anything more than a novelty.

Any cypherpunk worth the name would say the solution is to use Pretty Good Privacy or some other type of personal encryption technology, but this technology is still in a legal gray area. Phil Zimmerman, the inventor of Pretty Good Privacy, faces indictment from the U.S. Department of Justice for giving his software away to netters outside the United States. For more detailed information there are many privacy and security resources online. One of the best is the Electronic Frontier Foundation (http://www.eff.org), a non-profit civil liberties group working to protect privacy, freedom of expression and open access to the Internet.

Like every element of cyberspace, online security is in the midst of dramatic change. Everyone who is online is part of the Internet, and that means that you can have a voice in deciding what the future of Internet security will be. Until then, change your password often and keep your Swiss bank account number to yourself.

EXPORT YOUR VERY OWN MUNITIONS

By tacking three lines of PERL code onto your e-mail signature file, you can strike a blow for personal privacy, make a gesture of solidarity with Phil Zimmerman, the inventor of Pretty Good Privacy, and possibly piss off the government. The lines of code, which implement an RSA encryption and decryption program, are free for the taking at the Export-a-Crypto-System .sig site (http://dcs.ex.ac.uk/~aba/rsa-perl.html).

At the site there are lots of pages devoted to stunningly incomprehensible lines of code and obsessive hacking to make the .sig file as small as possible: "...this was improved upon by Chris with the fiendishly clever s/./d*ım$^ınpercent/g, saves a whole 14 bytes!" Fortunately for the UNIX-impaired, there are also a number of lucid, well written pages detailing the ongoing legal struggle of cypherpunks around the world who want this information to be free. Strong cryptography is considered a munition in the United States and cryptography of any sort is actually illegal in France.

The site's stated goal is to get the U.S. government to examine the contradictory nature of its cryptography export rules, citing such examples as books on advanced cryptography that may be freely exported, but whose contents may not be exported over the Internet.

About the .sig file? "It may be technically illegal to use this .sig if you are a U.S. citizen," the site warns. It is exceedingly unlikely that the government would actually pursue legal action against someone who used the it, but the question arises because every time you send e-mail across U.S. borders, you export three lines of code that the government technically classifies as a weapon. Under International Trade in Arms Regulations, your new .sig file could earn you fines of up to $1,000,000 and a long prison sentence.

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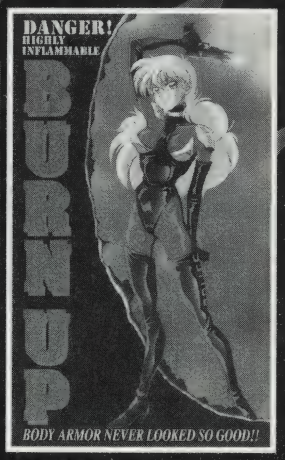

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Confessions of a

David Wagner doesn't have a publicity photo, but the way he and his friends are attracting attention, he's going to need one.

The 21-year-old grad student is playing a pivotal role in two of the biggest stories to hit the Internet since CNN learned to spell Kevin Mitnick's name correctly.

Wagner and fellow University of California at Berkeley grad student Ian Goldberg created quite a stir in the press in late September when they discovered and widely publicized a significant security flaw in Netscape's Web browser. They were in the news again in mid-October when they brought to light another security flaw, this time in the basic structure of the Internet. The flaw, well known to Internet security experts, earned the pair their second *New York Times* front-page story in three weeks.

IU recently talked to Wagner about cryptography, his part in the cracking of Netscape's browser security, working under looming deadlines and life after college.

The day after the first security break was announced, Sameer Parekh put up the Hack Netscape page (see sidebar), which detailed Wagner's and Goldberg's hack and praised them loudly as cypherpunks doing good work. But are they really cypherpunks? "Ian is more of a solid cypherpunk. I'm kind of a fringe cypherpunk...but it would be nice if companies that said their stuff was secure actually was secure."

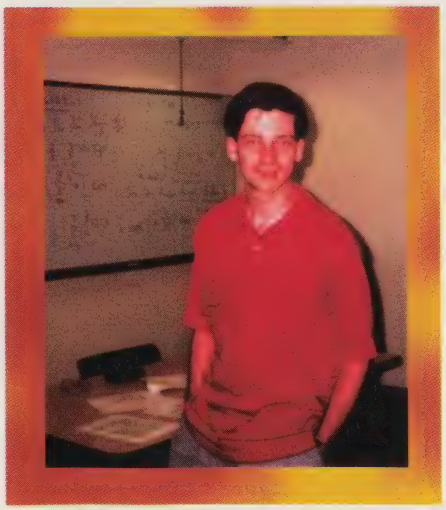
What's a nice computer science student doing getting involved with all this crypto stuff, anyway? "I started our interested mainly in mathematics, computer science and also civil liberties to some extent. Soon I drifted into computer security," he says, "Since cryptography is a common tool to use in computer security, I guess it shouldn't be surprising that from there I happened to find cryptography and loved it."

From there, it was a short trip to the front page of the *Times*. "A month before this whole brouhaha started, people were wondering what random number generator Netscape was using and Ian had taken a look at it and disassembled it, then sort of reverse engineered how it worked and posted that to cypherpunks (the newsgroup alt.cypherpunks) and had some discussion about it."

After seeing Ian's work online, Wagner had no idea that fate would bring them together. "About a week before we discovered the flaw, I was looking at their randomness code separately, without knowing about Ian being here or anything. It turned out we were both first-year grad students, who were in the same office, sitting almost next to each other, looking at exactly the same problem and we didn't even know it. So we sat down and said, 'Hey, let's compare notes.' He told me what he had done, and I was telling him about what I was looking at.

"He got interested, starting to look more carefully at it. I was looking at it from a different point of view than Ian, from some application notes that Netscape had released, so I kind of had a specific area I was interested in looking at. So we dove right in. Ian did a lot of disassembly, since he knew what he was doing there. It helped to have two different people working on it with different abilities."

The last few months have seen several developments in the cryptopunk world. In August, senior cypherpunk Hal Finney issued a challenge to the Internet community at large to decrypt a "secure" message he had made using an export version of Netscape's browser (because U.S. law puts strong cryptography in the same category as munitions, export versions of security software are weaker than domestic). Two separate teams of people broke the message in about two weeks. A second challenge was then issued, which was broken in 31 hours by a concerted effort of about a hundred different people online.



David Wagner: A hacker and proud of it

The next big story was Wagner and Goldberg's Netscape discovery. Acting on a hunch, the pair discovered a flawed random number generator that was not quite random enough.

Hackers and wannabes alike have two chances to win cash and fabulous prizes by reporting bugs and security weaknesses in Netscape Navigator. Well, Okay, so there's only some cash, and the prizes are generally coffee mugs and T-shirts. Hack Netscape (http://www.c2.org/hacknetscape) offers a custom "I hacked Netscape" T-shirt to anybody who can find a flaw in the browser's security. Sameer Parekh runs the contest, which he hopes will help promote more rigorous security standards on the 'net. Parekh gets the award for originality: Hack Netscape was up and running the day after the Netscape security flaw was announced.

CONTESTING CONTESTS

But the newest link on the Hack Netscape page tells the whole story: "Netscape Imitates Hack Netscape." Opening the link takes you to the Netscape Bugs Bounty contest (http://home.netscape.com). This is the official Netscape

by John Wesley Hardin

Netscape Hacker

"It took some time to figure out how Netscape was generating their random numbers, because we had to translate the machine code. So there was maybe a day

Ian Goldberg, Wagner's partner in "crime"

figuring out what they did and how they did it. Then, once we kinda had reverse engineered that part, we said 'uh-oh.' We could look at it and say 'I think this is pretty bad.' So we spent another day or two writing a program to actually exploit the weakness, to make sure that we weren't missing something, to make sure there really was a weakness."

With their new software, Wagner and Goldberg hacked the Netscape browser in 25 seconds. They had the ability to freely decrypt any "secure" documents read or generated by the browser. Wagner confirms that sloppy programming at Netscape allowed them to break the cryptography so quickly.

"It was surprising that it was that fast," he said. "Well, in a sense it was surprising. I mean, the problem in seeding the random number is one that lots of people have gotten wrong in the past.

"There's a well-known rule of thumb among cryptography people that this is something you have to do right and be very careful about. It's a known weakness. That's why I was looking at it: to see whether they knew that rule of thumb."

Obviously, someone at Netscape wasn't familiar with that particular rule, or they missed it that day. Wagner understands. "From experience, it's very easy (to make this kind of mistake). When you're working on a large program, under big deadlines, with complicated stuff, you're all absorbed in what you're doing. You see the trees and miss the forest. It's almost unavoidable, it's human nature. Really, the only way to get around it is have other people, independent of you, take a look at it. They'll be looking at different things and have a different mind set. After you've spent a month working on something you say, 'Oh, I know this is perfect, I know exactly how it works and I wrote it.' You become very confident and it is easy to make mistakes." It's interesting to note that Netscape has now implemented widespread changes in their code checking and software quality assurance, including releasing their source code to security experts on the Internet.

Fortunately for Netscape, Wagner and Goldberg didn't go on a credit card number-lifting binge. Instead, they immediately publicized the news. "Posting it to alt.cypherpunk was kind of our way of showing it to a community of people who we knew would want to see it."

If Wagner and Goldberg were relatively blasé, the announcement came as a bombshell to many. "The day after we posted it to alt.cypherpunks, it got on the front page of *The New York Times,* and the next day everyone else saw it and it exploded," Wagner says the resulting press attention caught them completely by surprise. "We had no idea. It was totally unexpected. There was a lot of response the first couple of days."

Netscape moved quickly. The original posting was on a Sunday. By Wednesday, Netscape released a patch that fixed the random number seed. "Oh, yeah. Somebody there was burning the midnight oil," Wagner says with a laugh. "I've got a lot of sympathy for the poor guy who had to fix it in two days, with all that publicity, and people saying, 'Make sure you get it right this time!'"

Even though hacking into the best-known software in cyberspace and publicizing a heretofore obscure security gap on the Internet will look good on a resume, Wagner is skittish about discussing where he might go after college. "Ohh, no," he laughs again, refusing to consider it for long. "I'm a first year, and I'm trying for my Ph.D. That's my goal for right now, I wanna get a Ph.D." He pauses for a moment, thinking about what he has just said. "Yeah, wow, that's enough, to decide to get a Ph.D., much less what I'm going to do when I get out of college. But probably something in industry or academia. Academia is probably more like it."

Yeah, Bill Gates probably said the same thing when he was 21.

contest, and has less outlaw flavor about it than the Hack Netscape pages.

Apparently, Netscape felt that free T-shirts weren't enough incentive, and they are offering $1,000 for anyone who finds a serious security flaw in the new Netscape 2.0 beta. Other rewards—you guessed it, coffee mugs and T-shirts—will be given to users who find other, less dramatic bugs.

What does Parekh think of Netscape's decision to start their own contest? "It is certainly a good thing that they are encouraging people to look for bugs and offering rewards for doing so. The end result will be a better product. It is interesting though that they are offering a limited number of awards for non-security bugs. They seem to expect a large number of bugs reported, more than they can afford to give out free mugs and T-shirts for. It's probably good that they are at least releasing it as a beta before it is ready, as opposed to Windows95." That doesn't mean Microsoft's safe. Hackers have set up a "Hack Win95" contest, too. -JWH

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Browsers' capabilities will explode next year

Navigating the Brave New World of Web Browsers

BY JOHN WESLEY HARDIN

This page is not enhanced for Netscape 1.2.

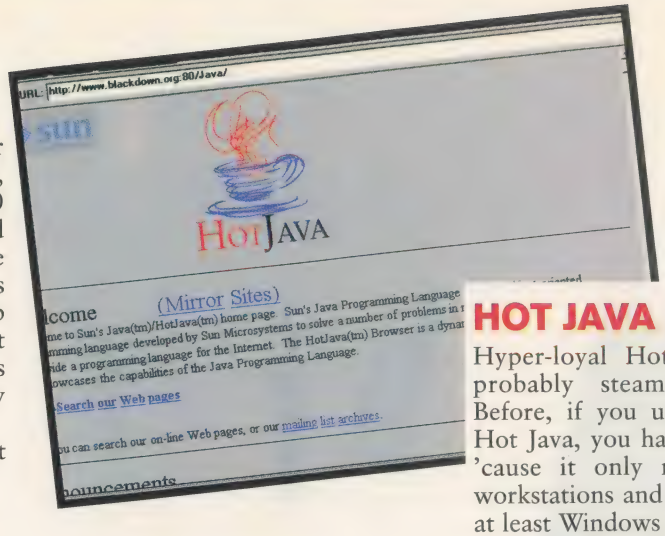
Have you ever wondered why some people online are so... strident, when it comes to proclaiming their loyalty to their favorite Web browser? Although it's all the same Internet underneath, one need spend only a little time on the 'net to encounter sloganeering for Netscape over Mosaic, or Hot Java over Netscape, or all of them over AOL.

The reason lies in the fact that Web browsers are not so much software as they are ideologies.

Seriously, what is an ideology but a way of looking at the world? Like religion and politics, the browser interprets the World (Wide Web) and gives it shape. We can't see—hell, we don't want to see—what the Internet really looks like. All we know is the 'net as it is shaped by the doorways we look through.

Different flavors of browser have different capabilities though, and when you spend 20 or 30 hours a week online, the Web and the browser become as one in the user's mind. And just as surely as the word "liberal" makes Bob Dole twitch, some people can't stand the thought that other folks might be seeing things differently from them.

This rundown of the latest browsers is for the rest of us.



NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR 2.0:

The Big Dog of Web browsers returns with many new features, some of which are much needed improvements over version 1.1.

One of the biggest changes is the new Netscape mail utility, which is much more comprehensive than the previous version. It's still not as sophisticated as say Eudora, but you can now check your mail without ever leaving the warmth and safety of your browser. You can also embed live hyperlinks and images within e-mail messages.

Now, you also can read newsgroups without launching another program. Previous versions of Navigator supported newsgroups, but again, 2.0 improves upon that capability with a complete news reader as part of the browser. Newsgroups are fully threaded (the reader can see and reply to all messages). Though it is not yet implemented in Mac or Windows 3.1 beta releases, Netscape 2.0 will support the Java programming language (see Hot Java, below).

Additional features promise to keep Netscape at the top of the pile, as well. For example, 2.0 supports the Progressive JPEG file format, which loads images up to three times faster than the GIF file format. Netscape 2.0 also promises to be more secure by implementing secure S/MIME protocols and offering users access to the VeriSign digital signature service. For $6, users of 2.0 will receive a digital signature that serves as a sort of "Internet driver's license" for the purpose of sending secure messages and making purchases online.

At press time, Netscape was slated to release the beta Netscape Navigator Gold in mid-November. The Gold version has all the improvements of 2.0, and comes with a built-in WYSIWYG page editor, allowing anybody with a copy of Netscape Gold to publish HTML documents. "Essentially, it puts everybody in the business of personal electronic publishing," says Mike Homer, Netscape's vice president of marketing.

What happens to the Internet when everyone is publishing a Netscape HTML document? "Well," answers Homer wistfully "We'll sell more servers (laughs). No, it will change the way most people think about the Internet. People will quit looking at it passively, as something to be read, and start looking at it dynamically, as something to be created." Download the future at (http://home.netscape.com).

HOT JAVA

Hyper-loyal Hot Java users are probably steaming right now. Before, if you used Sun System's Hot Java, you had to be hardcore, 'cause it only ran on high-end workstations and Sun machines, or at least Windows NT. Now, they've gone and released a Windows 95 compatible version, and any jerk with a Pentium can join the club. Oh well, at least they never admitted the unwashed horde of Windows 3.1 users, eh?

Hot Java's major innovation over Netscape Navigator is its recognition of Java Applets, miniature programs, written in the Java programming language, that will run on any machine. Many people are excited by the possibilities of this technology, which could be used to run everything from animation to interactive games to online banking. Sun is planning on coming out with a Hot Java for Mac operating systems, but with Netscape supporting Java in the new version of Navigator, Hot Java's viability as a browser is in question.

NCSA MOSAIC 2.0

NCSA Mosaic was the original browser, the first gateway through which most people saw the Web. Though it was quickly surpassed by its cousin, Netscape Navigator, Mosaic still has a loyal following and is still free for the downloading at numerous sites across the 'net.

The latest update is almost a complete overhaul, with many new features that promise to beef up performance and enhance ease of

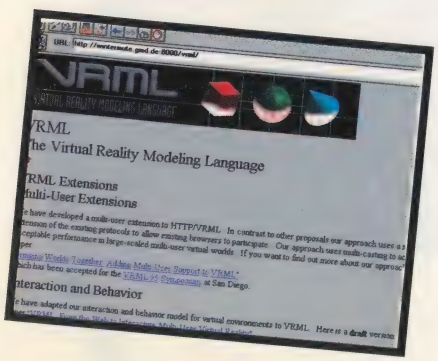
use. To make things easier, the help function has active links to online resource files, there are multiple cache directories, internal support for .wav files, many new user-defined preferences and a Netscape-like Stop button in the toolbar. Many technical refinements like enhanced HTML support and the ability to open multiple links at the same time, make Mosaic a more serious contender in the coming browser wars. Get yours at (http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu).

SONY CYBER PASSAGE

Sony is the first large consumer electronics firm to become involved with Virtual Reality Modeling Language, a language for describing 3-D scenes on the World Wide Web. Cyber Passage is Sony's VRML browser that recognizes VRML and Enhanced VRML 1.0 scenes and also reads HTML.

Navigational features include "Walk Through" for handling vague objectives, "Jumping Eye" information search with a bird's eye view, and a "Fly Through" based on automatic route setting. Enhanced VRML is a proprietary Sony innovation that can create interactive environments with sporadic and periodic events that affect the user. Also possible are autonomously moving objects, atmospheric sounds that give the feeling of actually being in a scene and moving images that can maybe be acted on as objects.

Cyber Passage is still in the Coming Soon phase, but more information is available from Info_CyberPsg@sony.com.



TRADEWAVE MACWEB

MacWeb is a Macintosh specific Web browser developed by the TradeWave corporation. It has many of the features that users take for granted in Web browsers, plus multiple preference files, so that one browser can support several different users.

MacWeb requires System 7 or later, and is PowerMac native. TradeWave says that MacWeb requires less memory than almost all other Internet navigators and will run on a wider range of hardware. The evaluation version of MacWeb is available at (ftp://ftp.einet.net/einet/mac/macweb/macweb.latest.sea.hqx).

CELLO

Cello could be called the poor man's Web browser, but that is unfair. The browser supports HTML, FTP, Gopher and Usenet newsgroups natively, and can plug in helper applications to handle other forms of information. Cello is useful to users who have less than optimal computing solutions. As the Cello home page notes, it will run on a 386SX-16 with as little as 2 megs of RAM, though "you'll like it better on a faster system with more RAM."

Cello was developed by Thomas R. Bruce at Cornell Law School. You can download version 1.1 at (http://www.law.cornell.edu/cello/cellotop.html).

MICROSOFT INTERNET EXPLORER

Developed specifically for use with Win 95, the Internet Explorer works either through the Microsoft Network or through a separate TCP/IP stack like Trumpet Winsock.

MIE is an ambitious piece of software, designed to be highly competitive in the browser market. Could we expect any less from Microsoft? MIE contains a complete mail utility, supports background sound and inline video streams and drag-and-drop features. When users are on a page they want to save, they simply drag a status icon onto the desktop to create a shortcut to that page.

Microsoft will release a VRML browser later this year, and Internet Explorer will display and browse VRML images using this browser as a helper app. Obvious benefits of using MIE include support by Microsoft, extensive ease of use and online help. Windows 95 users (and anyone else) can download a copy of MIE at (http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/iexplorer.htm).

You don't have to limit yourself to one way of looking at things. All knowledge is *not* contained within the

browser, and who knows what you might see if you tried out a couple of new and different Web navigation programs?

One place to start investigating other Web browsers is the City.net Browser Checkup Page (http://www.city.net/checkup.cgi). Besides investigating your browser software and alerting you if a newer version exists, City.net has links to almost two dozen other Web browsers.

The Internet is a big place. Explore it joyfully, but remember to stop and take time to smell the browsers.

art by christian northeast/reactor

the Arbiters of cool

E THE SISKELS AND EBERTS OF THE BANDWIDTH, JUDGING THE COOL, THE BAD OR THE SIMPLY USELESS. BUT WHO ARE THESE GUYS – AND ARE THEY COOL?

BY THE STAFF OF INTERNET UNDERGROUND

Once, in a forgotten time, "cool" meant chilly. No more. A recent Webcrawler search brought up 10,894 references to "cool sites." One of the first places a new user visits will likely be the many links highlighting Web sites as cool, now that most online services list these links in their own lists of top sites. But as the Web has expanded, these arbiters have not always been satisfied to simply deem what is cool. Sites have popped up defining the useless, the mediocre or the geeky. One Harvard University graduate even decided that with all the interest in finding good sites, it seemed necessary to highlight the worst. We decided to find out the stories behind these sites and how these lists are compiled. But more importantly, we wanted to know:

Who the hell do they think they

Cool Site of the Day

http://cool.infi.net

Glenn Davis was once a lonely recluse who collected tolls on an interstate turnpike. Now, he's an online celebrity, with a Web site that attracts more than 40,000 hits daily. He sorts through more than 200 e-mails every afternoon, most from people asking him to just look at their Web sites. A few even try to bribe him.

"The best was from a couple. This guy said he would have the Cool Site of the Day logo tattooed on his wife's buttocks."

Davis jokes that he literally fell into the job from which he started Cool Site of the Day. He had tripped and sprained his ankle, which forced him to miss a lot of time from his job as a foreman in a factory in Norfolk, Va. Stuck at home, bored and lonely, he heard about a company that offered 'net hook-ups.

"I called them up and said 'How much is it?'" Within an hour, he hobbled in with his foot in a cast and slapped a check for $144 into the palm of an office worker for one year's worth of access.

With not much else to do, Davis started hanging out in his access provider's office. So much, they finally just hired him. He ran a bulletin board service and worked as a systems administrator, spending his spare time poking around the Web as it evolved. Davis developed a hobby of finding sites he liked, and started showing them to other people in the office. One day last August, he mentioned setting up a site to direct people to his links. His boss put him to work on it the next day.

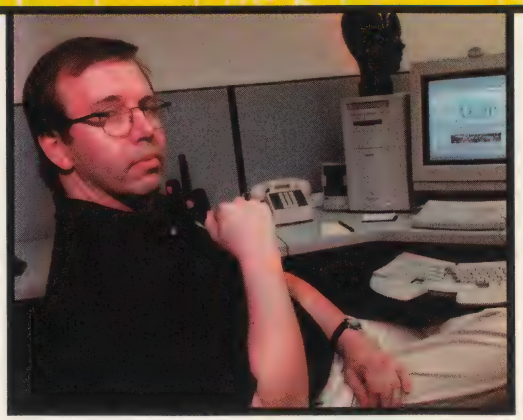
"At first, it was hard to find sites," Davis says. "There were people who told me that I wouldn't last a month." In the beginning, he had just a handful of hits. Then 200. Then 400. Now, more than 40,000 users hit Cool Site of the Day (CSotD for short). Even the early sites he chose pale to today's, largely due to Netscape and the advances it allows HTML programmers.

Davis chose "cool" after mulling over a number of other adjectives. "Great" didn't seem quite right; "neat" was just too geeky. Cool, he decided, seemed universally understood. "Every English speaking person understands the world 'cool,' I really believe that." Now the word plagues him. Not only does it seem the most overly used descriptive piece of language used throughout the 'net, he feels out of place using it describe anything else, including himself. "For years, I was very withdrawn. At parties, I would sit back in the corner. Now I don't do that. I go out, I talk to strangers.

"I had no idea Cool Site of the Day would take off like it would. But I have more self-confidence now. Sometimes, I'm downright

GLENN DAVIS, COOL SITE OF THE DAY

"Ninety percent of the web is pure DRECK. Part of the reason is that it's EASY... It's the same way everyone can paint, but not everyone paints WELL."



arrogant. But I have friends who I have given pins to puncture my head if I get too bad. I'm not as bad as I used to be."

He says that at least he does not list a litany of lengthy book-jacket-like endorsements on his site. Bob Alison, who runs the Spider's Picks, requires viewers to scroll down a full screen of such back-pats before getting to his lists. (Alison declined our requests for a phone interview.)

Davis now does most of his work from his efficiency apartment, rather than in the cubicle at Infinet. At home, he's surrounded by a Spider Man doll, a 7-Up Spot character (which he poses when he gets bored) and a pewter wizard holding a crystal ball. His computer sits amid piles of messy papers, mostly notes with unidentified phone numbers on them.

He has two screens for his Mac, one so that he can cull through his daily e-mail while he waits for sites to load up on the other. He reads all his e-mail, he says, even if he doesn't answer it. About half of the e-mail requests for site visits he receives come from women now.

"What makes a site cool? If you read my FAQ, I look at content, style graphics and personality. If it has something over the others, after I look at all those, I look at whether it's cool or not. There's no science, it's just my editorial judgment."

Davis usually knows within a few minutes if a sight is "cool" or not. Most of the time, he just mutters "ugh" and moves on. "Ninety percent of the Web is pure dreck," he says. "Part of the reason is that it's easy. Sure, everyone can do it, but not everyone can do it well. It's the same way everyone can paint, but not everyone paints well. This is a new medium. People are exposed to tools they never had before." Davis believes his success can be measured by the numbers of servers he routinely crashes. In the 'net world, recognition can be a dicey thing. One site, a crime scene investigation, received more than 100,000 hits the day it was mentioned in CSotD. The site's creator, Tom Arriola, was promptly kicked off his server.

"Sometimes that happens," Davis conceded. "There's a company in New York called Interport. I can't feature any of their clients' pages because they won't let me. I'll crash their servers," he says. "Does it make me feel bad? Sometimes, yeah. If my featuring a sight causes them to lose their ability to publish on the Web it does. I actually enjoy crashing a server, though. It just says, 'Hey, I'm showing this stuff to people.' That's what I want to do. I really enjoy discovering the little guy who worked hard on his page and deserves the recognition."

> "I want people to feel like they aren't SAFE. I'm hoping that knowing they could be singled out will SCARE people into making their pages BETTER."
>
> MIRKSY OF HIS WORST OF THE WEB SITE

Worst of the Web

http://mirsky.turnpike.net/wow/Worst.html

On the flip side of Glenn Davis, there's Mirsky, a Harvard University graduate who puts together the daily Worst of Web. Mirksy, who goes only by one name for "professional reasons," started Worst on the Web about a year ago, in direct response to the Cool Site of the Day and other lists like it. To him, it seemed like everyone with a Web site had their own set of "cool" links. So why not one with the worst?

"I consider myself a humor writer," Mirsky says. "I tried to do free-lance humor writing on TV. I started thinking that maybe I could do some humor for companies on-line." So he started spending time browsing the Web. "When you start using it, it's exciting, you get excited over *everything*. But then you become more savvy and start to realize that there's a lot of bad stuff too."

He wasn't sure if he would have enough material to keep up the site every day. Now he finds, there's plenty of bad stuff, just not all of it seems funny. He tries to find the most obscure sites possible by digging deep into personal directories or scanning entire lists of service providers.

"I guess I have a particular resentment for Cool Site of the Day. I personally feel like I have to respond to all the mail I can get. People send me nominations for WOW, but I have to know what people are thinking about my site. I don't really think Cool Site of the Day is providing anything special. If anything, it just helped bastardize the word 'cool.'" Mirsky says he's e-mailed Davis, but never received any sort of a response.

Mirksy doesn't just put up bad sites, he picks up sites that are incomplete, done with questionable taste or lack thought before execution. In a sense, he polices the Web, pointing out things that are interesting, funny and sometimes, ought not to be there. Something that bothers him is the sheer volume of self-indulgence manifesting itself on the Web.

"I want people to feel like they aren't safe. I'm hoping that knowing they could be singled out will scare people a little bit into making their pages better." The greatest trespasses are by those people who put pages online before completing them. The landscape of incomplete or poorly executed sites lends the Web its amateurish quality. It makes the Web look shoddy. People really need to develop their stuff off-line first."

Even with the exponential increase in the number of pages, Mirsky can't always find bad pages. Well, he can find just plain bad pages, but not pages that are humorous also. The former *Harvard Lampoon* writer searches the Web (he disdains the word "surfing") in the bedroom of his parents' home in suburban Boston. Each morning, he climbs down from the top bunk bed, the safety rail still attached, to the wall where his two robes hang at the ready, one heavy duty, the other lightweight.

are, anyway?

"Most days, I don't even get dressed. I sit in my bathrobe. I stand there in my underwear, determining which one I'll need that day." Sometimes, he'll surf for hours and not come up with anything suitable for his site. Searching the Web seems tiring to him now. He says he's not getting paid much from Volant, a San Diego-based service provider, to put together Worst on the Web. He's hoping to include some sponsorship soon. At least it lets him stay away from his series of bad day jobs.

"The worst job I ever had was to photocopy this 400-page manual on a regular copier. Another was when I had to type in a list of all the doctors in Germany. Those kinds of jobs helped me in a way. I learned to work fast and type quickly and get used to doing nothing for an hour or two. That's what searching on the Web is sort of like."

As you read this article, Mirksy is probably at it now, typing away on his Macintosh LC III, listening to some Duke Ellington.

"It's hard to know what's the best use of my time now. There are certain subjects that I haven't even explored. Someone asked me whether I did anything on financial pages. I started trying to look at some, but they are so boring. But the searching, I like the searching. It's satisfying when I find something no one else has found and it's really bad."

JENSEN HARRIS - MR. MEDIOCRE

Mediocre Site of the Day

http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~jharris

Only a finite number of Web sites can truly be deemed "cool" or conversely "useless." So what of those simply average Web sites that neither excite nor repulse—that middle 98 percent that Nixon might have dubbed, "the Web's silent majority?" Those sites fall into the territory of Jensen Harris, a 19-year-old sophomore majoring in music at Yale University and the Web's official judge of mediocrity. Since its launch last April, Harris' "Mediocre Site of the Day" has steadily built a following. Harris estimates his page attracts 600 to 800 visitors a day.

"I figured mediocrity could be something the American mainstream would tend to identify with," Harris says. He spends about an hour a day on the 'net in his cluttered residence hall bedroom. "I tend to organize vertically in piles," Harris says of his workspace which doubles as a music studio. "I'm messy, but it's not like I have tacos on the keyboard." Computers are just a hobby for Harris, who aspires to be a composer, conductor and music teacher.

Finding mediocrity is hardly a science. Harris receives 25 to 30 suggestions per day, but generally finds sites himself by typing random words into search engines and seeing where they lead him.

Harris says most people don't seem to mind having their sites deemed mediocre, but he admits he's more choosy now about whom he sends official notifications. Once he picked a natural underwater child-birth site. The site's creator promptly e-mailed Harris back, calling him the "Insensitive Male of the Day."

With the growth of the Web, Harris says he doesn't feel like he's in a competition with other Web arbiters. "There's no shortage of mediocrity out there," he says.

Harris enjoys his work as the gatekeeper of the so-so and the notoriety that comes with it. He vows he will continue to highlight mediocrity as long as the interest is there. Judging by sales of the latest Michael Bolton CD, Harris should be at it for some time.

Arbiters Amok!

Everybody's getting into the act! Fickle Web arbiters are popping up faster than Kenny Rogers' Roasters franchises along the interstate. Here are 20 more:

Cool Pet Site of the Day
http://www.acmepet.com/common/cool_pet.html

Political Site of the Day
http://ross.clendon.com/

Funky Site of the Day
http://www.realitycom.com/cybstars/index.html

Humor Site of the (Every Other) Day
http://bird.taponline.com/yourmom/HSotEOD.html

Mexico Cool Site of the Day
http://dch.mty.itesm.mx/cool/

Cool Science Site of the Day
http://abalone.phys.cwru.edu/~aharey/coolsci/

The Unusual or Deep Site of the Day
http://vvv.com:80/adsint/freehand/deepsite

Advertising Site of the Day
http://www.xplore.com/adsiteoftheday/home.html

Dynamite Site of the Nite
http://www.vpm.com/tti/dsotn.html

Short Attention Span Site
http://www.islandnet.com/~cwalker/sass.html

Hot Site of the Nite
http://www.euro.net/5thworld/hotnite.html

Legal Hotlink of the Week
http://www.ionet.net/~mdyer/lhotlink.shtml

Rock Site of the Day
http://www.xmission.com/~verve/rock/

Cool Globe of the Week
http://www.duke.edu/~nrm/globe/

Cool Medical Site of the Week
http://www.hooked.net/users/wcd/cmsotw.html

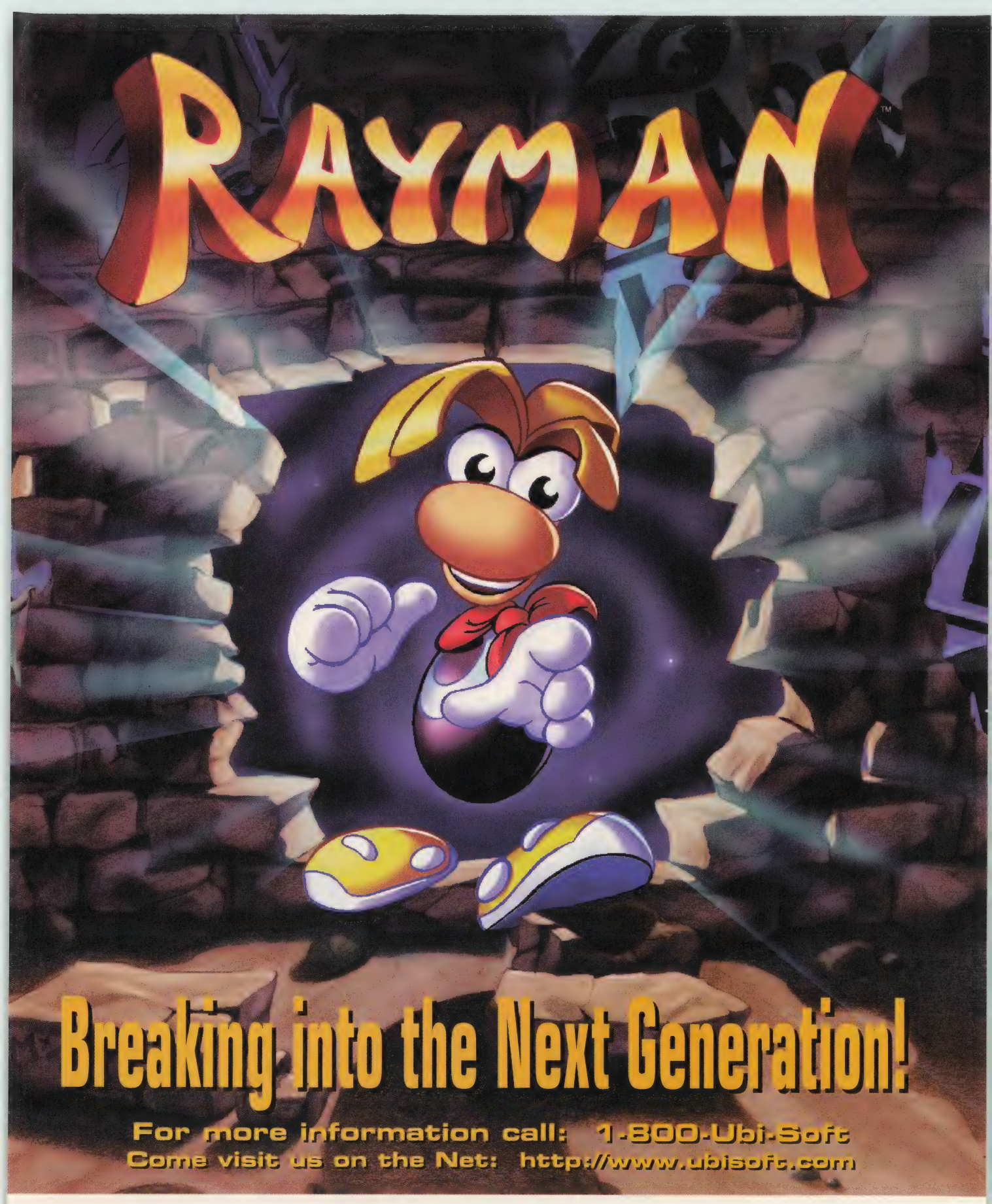
Sponsored Site of the Day
http://www.cris.com/~raydaly/sponsors.shtml

Literary Site of the Day
http://www.interlog.com/~ohi/inkspot/site.html

Wave of the Day
http://www.marketsquare.com:80/wave/index.html

Seeress of the Web
http://www.cyberzine.com/seeress/vision.html

And if you're looking for even more sites of the day/week/nite/whatever, be sure to check out Mart's Meta Pick, a site that catalogs and links to most of the above sites and believe it or not, lists a whole lot more.
http://www.euro.net/5thworld/metapick/index.html



JAGUAR™ 64-BIT

PlayStation

Ubi Soft

SEGA SATURN

CD Rom

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The Point

http://www.pointcom.com

Frequent surfers will recognize the symbol from one of the largest arbiters of cool, The Point. The Portland, Ore., company selects, on an admittedly subjective basis, the top 5 percent of Web sites. The Point, which receives upward of 200,000 hits a day, employs a full-time staff whose mission in life is to scour the Web for sites worthy of recognition. Compiling selections from 15 employees obviously leads to great variation in what's deemed cool; though the Point doesn't rate porno sites, just about everything else is fair game. The final say comes down from editor Ryan Holznagel, a former scriptwriter who strongly believes that coolness on the Web is determined not by outside arbiters, but by the unique visions of page designers.

RYAN HOLZNAGEL OF THE POINT

> "It would be hard to be an arbiter of COOL on the Web since one of the key PLEASURES for most users is being the ADMIRAL of their own expedition."

"It would be hard to be an arbiter of cool on the Web," explained Holznagel, "since one of the key pleasures for most users is being the admiral of their own expedition. What we try to do is point out interesting ports of call." Holznagel considers his background "appropriately eclectic" for the kind of work into which he's fallen. Having first learned BASIC in 1978 on a Commodore Pet, Holznagel gave up programming to study history at Willamette University in Oregon, then moved on to work in film and video. After a stint as story supervisor for the Saturday morning *California Raisin Show,* Holznagel won a 1992 Emmy for scripting *A Claymation Easter.* Though the gritty world of children's programming continued to beckon, Holznagel decided to move onto greener, or at least less trodden, pastures: multimedia and computers.

"The Web is perhaps the most individual and personal mass medium we have right now and the best sites generate a unique tone, a unique world." The Point rates not only commercial sites but personal home pages as well, selecting on the grounds of content, presentation and experience, similar to a restaurant guide's ratings on food, decor and service. Holznagel tries to look beyond the initial graphical impression for a deeper, more individual flavor. "Complicated or fancy isn't necessarily better. I like the feeling that I'm hearing from a strong, clear voice."

Having a base in Oregon has its advantages. After spending 10 hours on the Web, Holznagel can simply poke his head out of his Union Station office window to watch antique trains roll by or simply escape to "the forests, rain and physical reality" nearby. A decade spent around entertainment and computers offered Holznagel a sense of self-awareness about his job; most of the staid, egotistic seriousness of many Web arbiters seems missing from Holznagel's persona. He even speaks with humor about the effect of the Point on his social life: "Whenever I'm on a date now, just about every single topic of conversation makes me want to say, 'You know, that reminds me of something I just saw on the Web...' I think that gets old after a while — for my dates, anyway."

Useless Site of the Day

http://www.primus.com/staff/paulp/useless.html

There's no shortage of sites on the Web that seemingly serve no purpose. This axiom is evident to anyone who has spent more than 10 minutes on the 'net, but it took Paul Phillips to corral all those purposeless sites into the aptly titled Useless Pages.

It all started when Phillips, a 23-year-old student at the University of California at San Diego and self-confessed "computer nerd," was doing some late-night surfing and stumbled upon someone's CD collection. Phillips at the time was working for Primus, an Internet technology services company. When he posted his finding on a usenet group, others instantly barraged him with pointers to other sites that were just as, well, useless. "I discovered a whole undercurrent of desire to point this kind of thing out," Phillips says.

The site took off, but all that banality took a toll. Last spring, Phillips' enthusiasm lagged. "I just got so useless-ed out" says Phillips, who was getting more than 100 suggestions every day.

One of those suggestions was from Steve Berlin, a longtime fan of the Useless Pages, who at the time was working in an office that he described as a "virtual Dilbert strip." Berlin, whose T-shirt collection was one of Phillips' first useless sites, noticed the pages had not been updated. He e-mailed Phillips and volunteered to take over, an offer Phillips gladly accepted.

Although the site may be called "useless" it's been anything but for Berlin, a 33-year-old Bay Area resident who parlayed his quest for the vain into a full-time job at Yahoo. Checking out newly submitted sites for a living helps Berlin find plenty of useless sites. He also surfs for over an hour a day in a cluttered workspace just outside San Francisco.

Both Phillips and Berlin say that most people enjoy having their sites included on the Useless Pages. Phillips says the only person who ever got upset was a guy who published an entire site in Gaelic, who then pointed out he had a right to publish a site in his own native tongue on the *World Wide* Web.

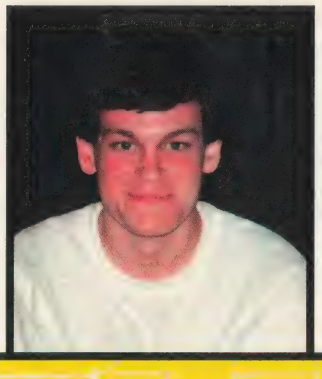
Phillips hasn't completely forsaken his page, checking in from time to time as "Useless Emeritus." For now, his agenda is filled with more purposeful pursuits like designing Boa, his own Web browser, and writing a game for Java.

Geek Site of the Day

http://riceinfo.rice.edu/~indigo/gsotd

It's only natural. After all, the 'net was set up by all those Defense Department and scientific types.

So there remain plenty of sites devoted to polyhedrons, ham radio, prime numbers, Atari systems, slide rules and radiation experiments. They're all sniffed out by Scott Ruthfield, a junior in computer science at Rice University in Houston. Ruthfield maintains "Geek Site of the Day" purely for his own pleasure and that of other geeks, a surprisingly large and loyal following of folk amused by Hewlett-Packard calculators, Scooby-Doo and ASCII art.



Ruthfield has no firm criteria for what makes a site properly geeky. He resists rules in general: "I'd be tempted to break 'em." He feels that people who judge and present cool sites too often claim responsibility for the quality of the Web. Scott feels that they only provide a service. The people who put up content are the real heroes.

Scott tries to get all the sites for a week done in one session, when he surfs on his personal computer, a 486 66MHz. Scott receives five to 10 e-mails every day. They fall into two camps, people trying to sell things to him and letters complimenting the site and nominating other geek sites.

Reflecting upon the growing popularity of nerds, Scott says, "Geekiness is a cool little trend, in the same way that roller derby was trendy; most people find it interesting to gawk at but would never actually want to participate."

"Geekiness is a COOL little trend, in the same way that ROLLER DERBY was trendy. Most people find it interesting to gawk at but would NEVER actually want to participate."

SCOTT RUTHFIELD OF GEEK SITE OF THE DAY

"Although I don't have a monopoly on defining it, I think I must classify myself as a geek." He thinks that it's tricky to classify what is geeky, since the word has become a kind of compliment. We asked Scott if he wore tape-mended eyeglasses, but he has perfect vision, boldly shattering a pervasive geek stereotype. He wears raggedy T-shirts and shorts for the most part and 90 percent of what he wears is Rice-oriented. "You know, like Rice blood-drive shirts. That's the only reason to give blood, isn't it? To get the shirt?"

Ruthfield files by the "pile system," and friends using his computer are warned not to disturb the towering stacks of paper. The rest of his room is littered with mementos from his debate trips, a plastic crab stolen from a hotel in retribution for a particularly bad breakfast and a "cool chair which looks like it was ripped out of an airplane, but it wasn't. We don't know where it came from. It leans all the way back and kind of rocks back and forth." His roommate previously won an award for "cleanest room of the year"; Ruthfield says with a chuckle. "Then he got stuck with me."

Who the hell do we think we are, anyway?

Staggeringly knowledgeable of both Internet history and myth, the editors of the *Internet Underground* recently underwent a grueling six-week boot camp involving 10 to 12 hours each day of unadulterated surfing. *IU* uses only the most technical methods to celebrate the world of the Internet. Our reasoning: A creation as well organized and devoid of fluff as cyberspace must be studied with intense scientific care and precision. Each site is laboriously inspected by the staff before it's logged into the Big Board, a massive hunk of organizational splendor that towers above our spacious offices decorated in glorious sanitary white.

(Actually, we're just like all other Internet surfers with one notable exception. All of us used to tool across the Web as a hobby, now we do it for a living. We developed our knowledge of the 'net the same way everyone else has gathered it, by spending a hell of a lot of time procrastinating. Collectively, our greatest brush with Internet greatness was experienced by assistant editor Sarah Ellerman. She lived in Champaign, Ill., as an undergraduate of the University of Illinois during the genesis of the Web browser Mosaic. Physically, the closest she got to the project was sitting outside the National Center for Supercomputing Applications eating Jamocha Almond Fudge ice cream. She once dated a guy that worked at NCSA, but he had nothing to do with Mosaic. He was kind of a dork anyway, she says.)

Also in this article: *IU's* definitive and exclusive "how to" tips on the construction of a magazine article. Follow the numbers to our handy guide on page 57.

fig.1

fig. 3

TEN

Things Jesus Wants You to Know. Cannibis Canada. Eyeball Orgasm. Gerbil - A Queer Culture Zine. Mutual Funds Magazine.

Browse any online newsstand and you'll find rows of titles like the ones listed above, evidence that electronic printing presses are working overtime, with an unusual group of people steering—or rather rocking—the digital publishing world.

Young publishers have been putting together e-zines (electronic magazines) since the late '70s. Back then, the 'zines were limited to ASCII format, type and the occasional picture put together with a clever combination of)* ^ #s. Two years ago, there were perhaps a couple of dozen, but now with the advent of the Web, and consequently the ability to include graphics with text in a format accomplished with a relatively low learning curve and low cost, the world of e-zines has exploded. It's difficult to determine how many 'zines hang out on the ether. A Gopher List at gopher://gopher.etext.org/11/Zines catalogs more than 600, from the *John Denver Internet Fan Club* to *Fondle.My.Balls*.

fig. 4

fig. 5

BY

A second list of e-zines maintained by John Labovitz at http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list/index.html shows that the market is clearly dominated by computer/Internet, fiction, popular culture, sports and music e-zines. A second tier, in terms of numbers, includes science fiction, politics and the environment. Despite the hype about cyberporn, few 'zines are devoted exclusively to erotica or porn.

So who's publishing all this stuff? *Internet Underground* surveyed 50 editors via e-mail to get a sense of what kind of people

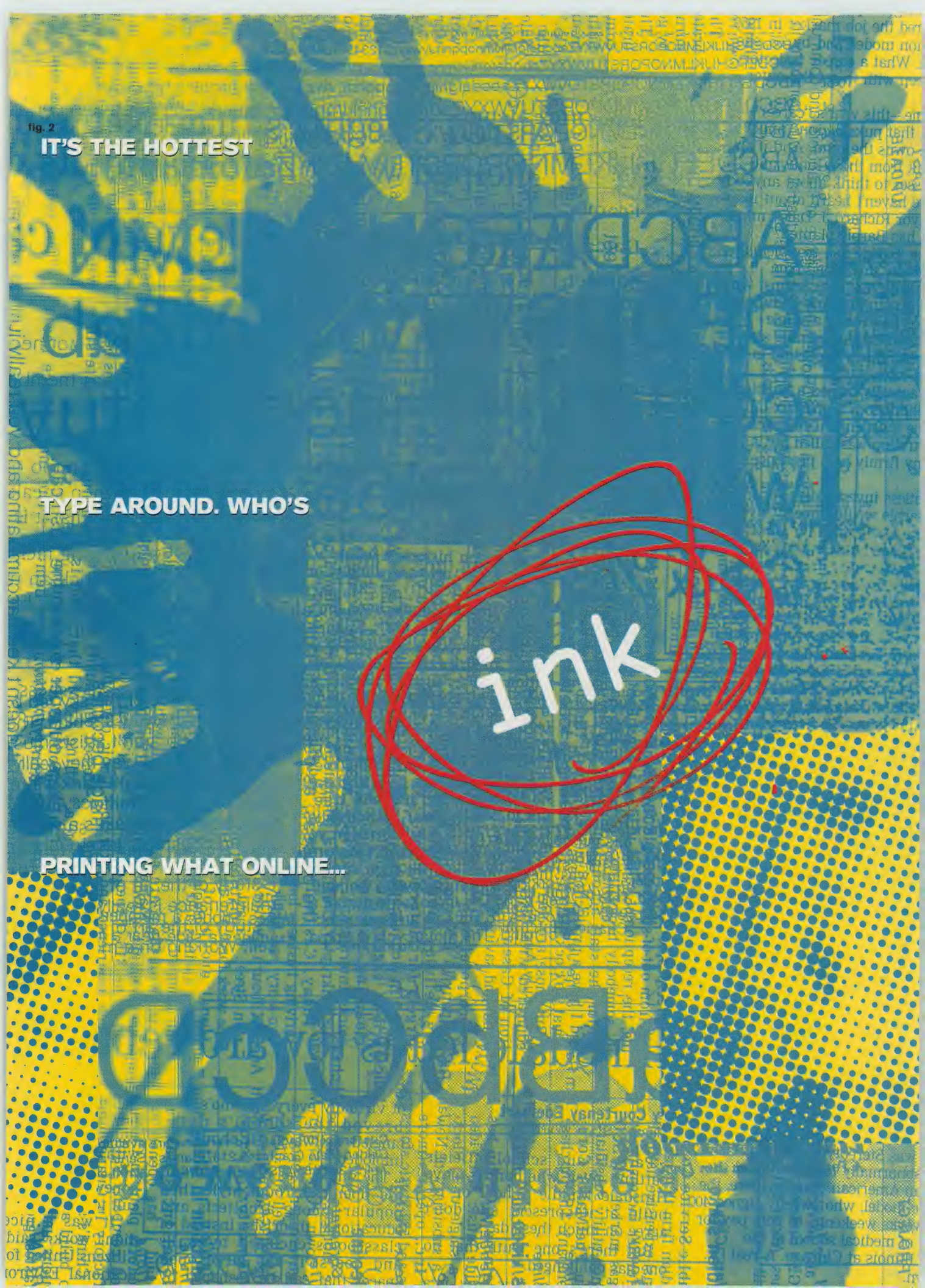


fig. 2
IT'S THE HOTTEST
TYPE AROUND. WHO'S
ink
PRINTING WHAT ONLINE...

were publishing online, whether they felt they had to fight for legitimacy compared to the dead tree variety, and that sort of thing.

We were lucky enough to have most of the 'zine editors respond to our survey, most within 48 hours. Hey, whoever said computer geeks don't have a life?

Although our questionnaire was hardly scientific, it offers a glimpse at the demographics of the e-zine editors. More than half are in their 20s or younger; 11 are college students. The average age is 30. Nearly all the respondents are male.

Few common denominators exist in occupations or locales. Jobs range from attorney to musical dramatist to the *Playboy* Adviser, publishing from North Carolina to California, from Australia to Germany.

For some editors, the reason to publish online is remarkably simple. It's not expensive (once you get past the necessary hardware); new HTML programs allow non-geeks to program Web pages. Then there's that single driving ambition: worldwide recognition.

"First, I'm a computer nerd," responds Chris Conway, 18, editor of *Fat Nipples*, an e-zine with a punk perspective, "second, it reaches thousands of people inexpensively (compared to printing costs, etc.)."

Other editors provided more complex sociological answers. Nathan Saliwonchyk, a 20-year-old psychology student and editor of *beanie*, a self-described "bizarre collection of fiction, truths, half truths and illustrations," says, "I didn't decide to do this, exactly. beanie asked us to send freedom to people in this world and well, we couldn't say no. If we did, he wouldn't give us anymore chocolatey Wagon Wheels."

Having a relatively low overhead and instant distribution seems particularly attractive to college students, too poor to publish on paper, yet with ample access to hardware and servers through universities.

"Now people with talent have access to publish things instead of people with money," Saliwonchyk says. Vera Rabyd, 45, the editor of *Coven Pride*, agrees. "Overhead is now better spent on bridges and roads rather than rash, illiterate ravings of the rich who can summon the overhead for a horrific print glossy."

Although they believe this movement started with desktop publishing, editors agree that the Internet has leveled out the playing field for those without extensive resources.

"In the paper world, I would have been broke after one issue," says Brian Murphy, a 27-year-old who works as a carpenter by day, then as the sole writer of Brian at night. "Now I can compete with anyone. You're only limited by your imagination, especially out here."

But is everyone's imagination worth publishing?

"Owning a computer isn't the same as possessing editorial sense. It's a sad fact that the stories and poetry published in most—99 percent—of the fiction e-zines is dreadful," says Meg Hamel, the 30-year-old publisher of *Century*, a bimonthly short-story magazine.

"It's a two-edged sword and aren't they all?," says Steven Jarvis, 26, editor of the quarterly literary journal *Kudzu*. "It's allowed people with real creativity and taste to put out good work. On the other hand, while in the print world a bad news magazine won't last past the first issue or two, it allows bad e-pubs to live on indefinitely."

Mike MacLeod, 43, of *Channel Four*, an e-zine about type four personalities, argues, that leveling the field does not necessarily bring down the quality across the board. "All things

Avoid using large quantities of white text knocked out of black, as it is difficult to read and hard to track from line to line.

figure 6. pull quotes: In publishing, pull quotes are used to emphasize a statement within the story. Visually, they are used to break up space within the text more dynamically. They should not simply float by themselves on a page. (See also: read out.)

HEY, WHOEVER SAID THESE COMPUTER GEEKS DON'T HAVE A LIFE?

fig.6

"NOW PEOPLE WITH TALENT HAVE ACCESS TO PUBLISH THINGS INSTEAD OF PEOPLE WITH MONEY," NATHAN SALIWONCHYK, 20, EDITOR OF *BEANIE*

"First, I'm a computer nerd," says Chris Conway, 18, an e-zine editor. "Second, it reaches thousands of people inexpensively (compared to printing costs, etc.)."

fig. 7

figure 7. ladders: Ladders occur in copy when more than three hypens in a row are present in unjustified or justified type. This makes it difficult for the reader to follow, and is unsightly. They tend to make copy editors nervous and agitated.

Key to Preceding Spread

figure 1. headline: The headline declares what the story is about, and is often witty. It is larger than the body copy and easily grasped by the reader. Never, ever hyphenate or break words within the headline.

figure 2. deck: The deck, along with the headline, gives the reader a quick overview of the story. These two items should be placed at the top of the page and in close proximity to one another.

figure 3. drop cap: The drop cap is the first letter, and the first letter only, of the body copy that is traditionally much larger than the rest of the text.

figure 4. body text: The body text is the story itself. Most body copy is justified, although flush left ragged right is acceptable for columns and shorter stories. Avoid using ragged left type, as it is hard for the reader to track.

figure 5. byline: Give credit where credit is due. Make sure to list your writer who, in this case, is **Jeff Teal.** This is usually slightly larger than the body copy, but not as large as the deck. Place it near the top of the story.

INTERNET USERS ARE NOTORIOUSLY PICKY ABOUT E-MAIL.

BUT SOMEHOW WE SATISFIED OVER 4 MILLION OF THEM.

If an e-mail program can survive the merciless scrutiny of the Internet community, it's got to be good. Unlike many other e-mail packages, Eudora Pro™ is an open, standards-based e-mail application designed specifically for the Internet. It has all the powerful features you'll ever need. Yet it's extremely easy to use.

Eudora Pro lets you attach sound, graphics, or video files to any message and automatically launches them in their applications. It also separates your urgent memos from regular ones with rules-based message filters. You even get a built-in spelling checker and a customizable address book.

"Cleanly implemented and simple to use, Eudora has become one of my favorite tools for cruising the net." –PC World

"Eudora is the pioneer Internet e-mail..." –MacUser

4½

Eudora Pro comes with everything you need right in the box—including a free sign-on offer from an Internet access provider, step-by-step online help, and 90 days of free technical support. Want more information about our award-winning Windows and Macintosh versions? Just call **1-800-2-EUDORA ext. 6020**. Or send us an e-mail at eudora-sales17@qualcomm.com. Or visit our Web site at www.qualcomm.com/quest.

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considered, the publishing field will be more interesting and varied. When I was a teenager, basking in the chartreuse radiance of 1966 San Francisco a few miles away, few teenage boys played any instrument, let alone guitar. Now half do, or so it seems. But there are probably a hundred times more virtuoso players."

Michael Goldberg, editor of the graphically slick and info-packed *Addicted to Noise* and a former editor and staff writer for *Rolling Stone*, considers his music e-zine to be as mainstream a publication as any paper version.

"One of the reasons I started *Addicted to Noise* is that I saw nothing else out there that was doing anything near what I wanted to do," says Goldberg of the December 1994 launch. "I hired a lot of great writers, the top journalists and graphic artists...Most writers thought it sounded great."

Do not feel the need to fill white space with meaningless repetitive graphics and screens.

Goldberg, named Music Journalist of the Year that same year by the Music Journalism Awards, says he tries to take full advantage of the electronic medium by including sound samples and links from the subject of current articles to related articles from previous issues. Also, his magazine continually maintains up-to-date news on the music world, often daily. Those capabilities are something that a print magazine cannot offer.

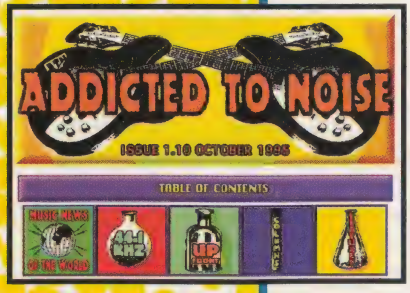
Despite the advantages of the medium, however, Goldberg has had some problems with bands and advertisers.

"Some bands, just to be contrary, don't want anything to do with online," he says, citing the punk bands Green Day and Rancid as examples. "Also, few companies had a sales rep for the Internet when we first started. We had to educate people on interactive online advertising." Goldberg says the key to gaining advertisers is routing Web traffic through the magazine site, which he says must be done through promotion and links within the 'net. Other editors said that getting links to their site was key. For some e-zines, it's been easy. Others have found that even regular readers may link to "cool" sites, yet not to e-zines, although they are not sure why.

"Some bands, just to be contrary, don't want anything to do with online," said Michael Goldberg of ADDICTED TO NOISE, citing the punk bands Green Day and Rancid as examples.

Goldberg does not yet break even with advertising revenue, yet he says, "it's only a matter of time." He says he will never charge readers for his magazine. "We made a very conscious decision to not charge. We didn't want there to be any roadblocks between our magazine and our readers."

Not everyone agrees with Goldberg's stance, such as Steve Velvington, editor of the *Star-Tribune Online*, the electronic version of the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*. The paper started its electronic publication earlier this year; other newspapers have been watching closely. In the end, Velvington believes most major newspapers will end up charging for their products. It's simply necessary to survive on the 'net, since most online publications are not able to support content through advertising.



"They're not making any money on the Internet," Velvington says of high-profile electronic newspaper efforts such as the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *Orlando Sentinel*. "If there is any exchange of money between advertisers and newspapers, it's just play money, experiment money. There have not yet been any successful experiments."

While that's the attitude of the larger dailies or even weeklies, most of the e-zines take issue with the idea of

charging for their publication. "Selling is for savages," says Wayne Bremser, 23, editor of *plagiarism. Beanie's* Saliwonchyk states, "If they charge them money, they're jerks. The Internet is about connecting people, not a business venture."

Some e-zines openly scorn the idea of accepting ads. "If an advertiser was willing to sit down with us, understand our editorial mission and understand who our readers are, we might consider advertising," said an editor at *Suck,* a self-proclaimed experiment in provocation, mordant deconstructionism and buzz-saw journalism. "But right now on the Web, most advertisers just care about 'hit,' or eyeballs. We've got 'em, but we're not interested in selling our content that way. Advertisers need to give up on the crass commercialism they're pummeling the 'net with."

Other editors, like 33-year-old Duncan Stickings of *Big Dreams,* a monthly newsletter focusing on personal development and small-business topics, are simply indifferent toward the business side of their magazine. "I have had a couple of advertising agencies contact me," he says. "I pass it on to my local service provider. They never follow up. I am not phased by this."

Jeff Zie, 26, online producer of *WebWorks* and *Emap Consumer Online*, says many advertisers are interested in the Internet but now only focus on mainstream publications that have name recognition–just like in the paper world.

Make sure to use resolution appropriate to your medium. Online graphics only need to be 72 dpi, but printed images should have dpi at least twice that of the linescreen the magazine will be printed at to avoid pixelation of the image.

E-zines as stand-alone products are viewed as less legitimate only because they are new," Zie says. Many editors comment that some businesses are unfamiliar with the 'net, so they cannot conceptualize a magazine that exists only on a viewer's computer screen. Editors at *BeatThief,* an eclectic 'zine that centers on music and poetry, said they've called up record companies asking for CDs to review or to interview bands and they keep asking questions such as, "So you've got a magazine on that Internet thing? How does that work exactly?"

"Once the 'backroom' element has been removed, people are far more receptive...Internet publishing will become a legitimate business, providing we continue to pursue the concept of broadening the experience of being online," Zie says.

'Right now on the Web, most advertisers just care about 'hit,' or eyeballs. We've got 'em, but we're not interested in selling our content that way...'

Editors may find they have more advantages over print in the near future, with innovations such as animation, better text control, plus video and sound improvements thanks to programs such as Netscape Gold, Java and Blackbird. Ultimately, the ability to offer much more than a paper magazine may be the digital ink world's greatest sword, allowing for a completely interactive reading experience with an e-zine.

Considering that in the earlier part of the century, publishing still required linotype, huge presses and lots of money, it's amazing how far technology has taken the medium. Many of the editors we surveyed felt the landscape of the 'net will eventually be littered by thousands of e-zines, some good, some bad and some, well, just out there.

"I think Gutenberg would drop to his knees and thank the Lord for this invention," Brian Murphy says. "The hard-boiled reporters wouldn't like it. It has no romance. They would retreat back into their Smith-Coronas." ●

Jeff Teal is a Chicago-based freelance writer who, like beanie, *has a fondness for chocolatey Wagon Wheels.*

http://www.lucasarts.com

Live and in color.

Internet Underground's

Below are the URLs of the e-zines that responded to our unscientific survey. We also added in a couple of 'zines we just happen to like a lot. (Aren't we a subjective bunch?) With many, we've included comments the editors made in the survey that we thought were great, but didn't end up in the story. But after reading this, you won't blame us for putting them in somewhere. Take a look, then go reading.

THE ABRAXUS READER
http://www.nwlink.com/-vidiot/abraxus/
What It Is: Fiction, poetry, and a few columns with a smattering of Seattle hipness.
Who Does It: Glen Starchman, 23, deli manager
Quote: "I think the name of a publication is infinitely important. For example, I would never pick up a magazine called *Pig's Feet* no matter how great the content."

THE ACID-FREE PAPER
http://tnt.vianet.on.ca/pages/smithk/
What It Is: A monthly 'zine dedicated to art, literature and communication culture.
Who Does It: Kevin Smith, 36, artist, North Bay, Ontario, Canada
Quote: "A 'Gee-Whiz, this is neat' response to the Internet is a reflection of human nature. At times it feels like a big toy or playground we all get to use together."

ADDICTED TO NOISE
http://www.addict.com/ATN/
What It Is: Music magazine billed as the 'net's first serious rock 'n' roll magazine, with daily updates and interviews with major bands.
Who Does It: Michael Goldberg, former editor and writer at *Rolling Stone.*

AESCLEPIAN CHRONICLES
http://www.forthrt.com/-chronicl/homepage.html
What It Is: Discussion about the allopathic medical group dedicated to a synergistic team approach.
Who Does It: James M. Price, 59, administrator, Chapel Hill, N.C.
Quote: "The 'net is fast and getting faster. Television may hold your attention for 30 seconds, on the 'net, you have less than five."

AISLE SAY:
The Internet Magazine of Stage Reviews and Opinion
http://www.escape.com/-theanet/AisleSay.html
What It Is: Mostly New York-centered theater reviews and musings.
Who Does It: David Spencer, 41, professional musical dramatist, Long Island

AKDA: THE LITERARY WEB-ZINE OF THE PHILIPPINE PAGES
http://www.europa.com/-ria/akda.html
What It Is: Literary 'zine highlighting Filipino writers.
Who Does It: Ria Roncales-Goodwin, 25.
Quote: "AKDA has a paper companion and we will try to continue publishing in both mediums. Why? Because nothing still beats an actual printed issue. The touch and feel of it will never be achieved by an online version of your work."

AMERICA'S 4X4 4U VIDEO MAGAZINE
http://www.4x44u.com/pub/k2/ase.htm
What It Is: At long last, a 'zine for the 4x4 truck crowd
Who Does It: Kendra Cook, 31, and Bill Perkins, 41, producers and directors in public relations

BABYFISH
http://www.umich.edu/-babyfish/l
What It Is: A Detroit-based collection of articles, reviews, vegan recipes and murders by Detroit police.
Who Does It: Craig Stuntz, 24, student in Detroit
Quote: "I'm not so much interested in promoting myself as in keeping people interested when they come across me."

BAD SUBJECTS
http://english-server.hss.cmu.edu/BS/Bad.html
What It Is: A relatively radical collection of thoughts on religion, beer, the apocalypse and other things ripe for intellectual skewering .
Who Does It: Annalee Newitz and Jillian Sandell, graduate student instructors in Berkeley, Calif.
Quote: "This is one of the biggest problems with online publishing, especially for a politically radical journal like *Bad Subjects.* Nearly anyone can browse in a magazine store—only a few can browse the 'net."

BASILISK
http://swerve.basilisk.com/
What It Is: A very graphical forum for display and discussion of art and architecture.
Who Does It: Ed Keller, 29, a CGI renderer for architects

BEAT THIEF
http://www.beatthief.com/
What It Is: Plagiarism, Perjury, Blackmail and Shoplifting. Take from it what you will.
Who Does It: Wayne Bremser, 23
Quote: "The people with the big bucks can fill the web with bandwidth-sucking bullshit and get hype for no reason other than their bells and whistles. People see right through that shit, I think."

BELIZE FIRST
http://www.crank.com:80/belize/
What It Is: A travel quarterly focusing on Belize.
Who Does It: Lan Sluder, 49, Candler, N.C.
Quote: "A good publishing product is costly regardless of how it's published. You can publish crap online for not much, but you won't have many readers and you won't last long."

BIG DREAMS
http://www.wimsey.com/-duncans/BigDreams
What It Is: A 'zine dedicated to optimistic small business owners.
Who Does It: Duncan Stickings, 33, Vancouver
Quote: "It has opened the flood gates. Not every online publication will survive, though. People start out with good intentions, but drop off after a while."

THE BLUE PENNY QUARTERLY
http://www.comet.chv.va.us/epubs/
What It Is: An electronic journal of fine writing and art with ties to the literary small press publishing world.
Who Does It: Doug Lawson, Virginia

A BREED APART
http://www.pcix.com/abap/index.html
What It Is: A forum dedicated to the care of retired racing greyhounds.
Who Does It: Bruce Skinner, 28, molecular biology reagent salesman

BRIAN
http://www.streams.com/brian/
What It Is: Stuff that interests Brian.
Who Does It: Brian Murphy, 27, carpenter, Chicago
Quote: "I think Gutenberg would drop to his knees and thank the Lord for this marvelous invention. The hard-boiled reporters wouldn't like it. It has no romance. They would retreat back into their Smith-Coronas."

BUNNYHOP MAGAZINE
http://www.slip.net/-bunnyhop
What It Is: Print-based publication exploring the soft and fluffy edge of pop culture.
Who Does It: Seth Robson, 24, art director for a San Francisco software company
Quote: "In the mad, hype-fueled rush for everyone to get online, people often don't take things into consideration. It's like they'll put just about any ill-conceived, poorly-executed material out there, just so they can say they're online."

CAT MACHINE
http://www.students.uiuc.edu/-wiberg/cat
What It is: Literary 'zine, heavy on poetry
Who Does it: Chris Wiberg, 19, student

CENTURY
http://www.supranet.com/century/
What It Is: Fiction with a surrealistic edge.
Who Does It: Meg Hamel, 30, freelance editor in Madison, Wisc.
Quote: "Just because something can be on the Web doesn't mean it should be. TV Guide is one thing. A short-story magazine or a novel is another. It's still far more convenient and enjoyable to read from a paper copy that can be carried with you to the bath, the bed or the beach."

CHIP'S CLOSET CLEANER
http://virtumall.com/zines/chip/main.html
What It Is: Basically, things Chip finds in his synaptic closet—a medley of pop culture and sex.
Who Does It: Chip Rowe, 28, the *Playboy* forum adviser
Quote: "There are still plenty of people without access. Freedom of the press still belongs to the people who own one, whether it's supplied by ink or ones and zeroes."

CHRONICLES OF CHAOS
http://www.geom.umn.edu:8000/-bmeloon/music/coc/coc.html
What It Is: Interviews and reviews of any band with "death" in at least two song titles and equipped with drill presses for percussion.
Who Does It: Gino Filicetti, 18, high-school student, and Adrian Bromley, 23, free-lance writer
Quote: "I thought that it would be impossible to approach record companies...I thought that they would laugh in our faces. But not one of them shunned us or turned us down. In fact, the response was ecstatic."

COVEN PRIDE
http://www.modcult.brown.edu/people/rabyd/Coven_Pride_814.html
What it is: A weekly forum dedicated to pseudonymous witches and warlocks.
Who Does It: Vera Rabyd, 45
Quote: "WAIT! THIS IS BULLSHIT! YOU GUYS AREN'T UNDERGROUND! I'VE BEEN HAD!"

Newsstand

I scream, you scream, we all scream for e-zines

CROPDUSTER
http://chat.carleton.ca/~smeece/crop.html
What it is: Sociological deconstruction of teen magazines and other celebrations of modern-day malaise.
Who Does It: Steven Meece, 22, college student, Ottawa, Canada
Quote: "We have no intention of making a living from this thing. That requires hucksterism, something I'm not really interested in. We lose money on every issue."

DAS BONNER UNI-MAGAZIN
http://www.rhrz.uni-bonn.de/~uzaooa/
Was Es Ist: Ein Student-Magazin aus Bonn, Deutschland
Wer Macht Es: Philipp Angermeyer, 24, student
Quote: "In Germany, the "WWW" is often pronounced 'Vorld Vide Veb'—you might find that amusing, my American girlfriend's mother does."

E-ZINE REVIEWS
http://sunsite.unc.edu/faint/eziner/index.html
What It Is: Provides a space for reviewers to express their opinions about the e-zines.
Who Does It: Blaise Faint, 29, Chapel Hill N.C.

FAT NIPPLES
http://pluto.njcc.com/~chris
What It Is: A personal punk-zine, with a lot of politics thrown in.
Who Does It: Chris Conway, 18, student at New York University, New York City

THE FLIP ZONE ZINE
http://www.europa.com/~ria/zine/zone.html
What It Is: An alternative 'zine for younger Filipinos.
Who Does It: Ria Roncales-Goodwin, 25.
Quote: "Text will always be more important than graphics. There's already a growing backlash against websites that display big graphics but really showing no content."

GEEKGIRL
http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/geekgirl
What It Is: A home amongst popular culture for the budding online grrrl.
Who Does It: rosiex, otherwise known as geekgirl, of Newton, Australia
Quote: "Our motto 'grrls need modems' (St. Jude) has been an awesome message to women who felt nervous about walking the plank. Us pirates give 'em a push."

GRILLED PTERODACTYL
http://www.ozemail.com.au/~drgrigg/ptero.html
What It Is: Personal fanzine filled with anecdotes of the author's experiences.
Who Does It: David Rowland Grigg, 45, interactive multimedia industry in Australia
Quote: "Self publishing is always interesting and individual—to me it replaces the Victorian habit of writing lots of long letters or diaries."

HARDC.O.R.E.
http://www.public.iastate.edu/~krs_one
What It Is: E-zine for Committee of Rap Excellence
Who Does It: Steve "Flash" Juon, 21, student, Iowa

INTERNET HERALD
http://server.berkeley.edu/herald/
What It Is: A 'zine published by and for Gen-Xers.
Who Does It: Auren Hoffman, 21, student at University of California, Berkeley

INTERTEXT
http://www.etext.org/Zines/InterText/
What It Is: A fiction magazine with a heavy bent toward science fiction, fantasy and horror.
Who Does It: Jason Snell, 25, associate editor

JOYCE WANKABLE
http://www.rbdc.com/~hgambill/joyce.htm
What It Is: Alternative music, underground film and the occasional twisted fiction snippet.
Who Does It: Herbert Gambill, 33, temp, North Carolina
Quote: "Like many, I always wanted to publish a 'zine but never had the money to throw away. On the Internet, I can publish a full-color edition of my magazine with sound clips at no extra cost than the $30 already pay a month for Internet access. Now my humble e-zine is available to thousands, perhaps millions of people who will never read it."

KILL YOURSELF
http://hops.cs.jhu.edu/~mbk/killyourself.html
What It Is: Sociopolitical e-zine exploring everything that's wrong with the world.
Who Does It: David Holtz, 17, high school senior, Indiana, Pennsylvania
Quote: "I think 'Kill Yourself' is pretty straight forward and possibly offensive. People tend to have a drawing toward offensive things. It gives them an opportunity to retaliate, to fight back"

KUDZU
http://www.etext.org/Zines/Kudzu/
What It Is: A quarterly digital magazine dedicated to compiling the best in fiction, poetry, and essays.

Who Does It: Steven Jarvis, 26, law student at the University of Arkansas
Quote: "Ninety percent of everything is crap. On the 'net, that number goes up."

MOON ONLINE
http://www.moonmag.com
What It Is: Online version of quality alternative weekly Who Does It: Colin Whitworth
Quote: "We use irreverence and satire to point out absurdity in our society. If that's what it takes to get people to read my stories, so be it."

THE MORPO REVIEW
http://www.morpo.novia.net/morpo/
What Is It: Not-your-usual suspect subjects, including sonnets to Captain Kangaroo and reviews of the existential context of Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham.* Who Does It: Robert Fulkerson, graduate student, Nebraska

NETCHEF ELECTRONIC MAGAZINE
http://www.netchef.com
What it is: A series of answers to the question "What do I want for dinner tonight?"
Who Does It: Jeff Hartweg, 27, and Tim Cushman, 42
Quote: "The name (of your e-zine) is absolutely critical. Because your competitor is a mouse click away, it's important to convey who you are in one second."

THE NEO PAGAN TIMES
http://scorpion.cowan.edu.au/~jmcnair/neopag.htm
What It Is: Witches, occultists, warlocks and so on, with a few music reviews thrown in for good measure.
Who Does It: John McNair, 39

PLANET MAGAZINE
http://users.aol.com/planetmag/home.html.
What It Is: A quarterly of science fiction, fantasy, horror, humor and poetry by no one you've ever heard of.
Who Does It: Andrew G. McCann, 37
Quote: "Those that are good are likely to survive, those that suck will die."

POOPLINE: ELECTRIC POOP GOD
http://www.globalgraphics.com/GlobalZines.html
What It Is: A bile-riling 'zine that takes a sarcastic aim at politics, trends, entertainment and life in general.
Who Does It: Tom Boyle, 26, owner of Global Graphics, Mountain View, Calif.
Quote: "Web publishing is a phenomenal opportunity. Where else can you distribute to possible millions of viewers with a full-color, interactive and multimedia periodical?"

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH:
The John Denver Internet Fan Club
http://www.sky.net/~emily
What It Is: Fanzine dedicated to the blond, environmentally correct star of "Oh, God!"
Who Does It: Emily Parris, 46, part-time courier
Quote: "The internet is like a vast frontier just 'waiting' to be conquered. In my case, I wanted to bring together the John Denver fans scattered across the globe."

RUSSIAN TRADE CONNECTIONS
http://www.zpub.com/rtc
What It Is: A monthly Web publication covering the commerce of our mortal enemies, oops, we mean good friends to the west.
Who Does It: Richard Petersen, 45, San Francisco, Calif.

SAM JOHNSON'S REVENGE
http://pobox.com/slt/
What It Is: Free-lanced essays on mostly serious and occasionally obscure issues.
Who Does It: Derek Davis, 56, free-lance writer
Quote: "I started *Sam's Revenge* as a one-man band with the hope of making money on the Internet but it proved (for now) a fantasy. I spent much too much time on it, lost much too much money and now have to put more effort into freelancing to support my family."

TERRORIST PROFILE WEEKLY.
(http://www.site.gmu.edu/~cdibona
What It Is: News and dire warnings about troublesome foreigners and militia types
Who Does It: Chris DiBona, 24, e-mail administrator for Washington, D.C. law firm.
Quote: "Electronic publishing is considered the equivalent of the pamphlet given out at the top of the subway escalators—sometimes it's true, sometimes it's loony."

THE UNDERGROUND REVIEW
http://www.ionet.net/~ordway
What It Is: A smorgasbord of juicy stuff from the politically incorrect agenda.
Who Does It: Davis Mauldin, 48, Internet product salesperson in Tulsa, Okla.

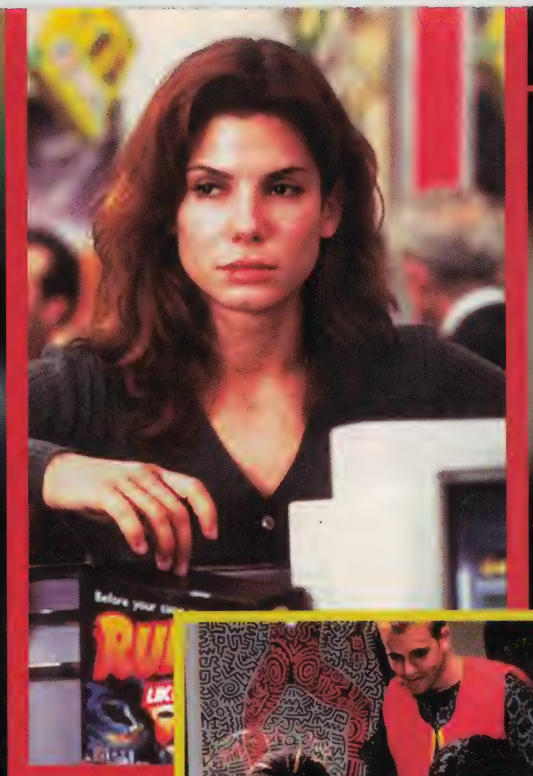
X MAGAZINE JOHN
http://michaeljones.uoregon.edu/
What It Is: A pop-cultural extravaganza aiming at twentysomethings
Who Does It: Michael Jones, Oregon

For more e-zines, consult
JOHN LABOVITZ'S E-ZINE LIST
http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list/index.html
An exhaustive list describing more than 600 alternative, independent and other 'zines.

They've got BIG stars, thrilling special effects SO...

WHY ARE MOVIES ABOUT THE 'NE

TECHNOLOGY SO LAME?



Technology has played the villain since the earliest days of cinema. From *Metropolis* in 1927 to *2001: A Space Odyssey* in 1968, filmmakers learned to play upon our cultural fears of a world enslaved by the technology mankind created. Terminators to cyborgs, computers in films have transformed into symbols of our capability for evil. Like the Frankensteins and Draculas of old, limitless technology is our modern monster.

Today, with computers entering more homes, the growth of the Web and the creation of virtual reality, a technocratic future vision is no longer such a laughable premise. Computers and technology continue to fascinate the contemporary imagination; one can travel to Istanbul by way of Beijing with the click of a mouse or access the U.S. Library of Congress while hiking through Peru. As AT&T has told us, if you can't do it now, "You will." Corporations such as Microsoft and MCI spend millions to market the concept that technology is our friend. But for all that technology offers us, there is a flip side– an undercurrent of fear that Hollywood has attempted to exploit. Even the most skilled techno-pundit still must fear that computers and technology will at some point make him obsolete. That's where Hollywood enters. Directors know everything good must have a touch of evil; computers are no exception. The first film to pioneer the genre and still the most successful film to center around computers was 1983's *WarGames* . Matthew Broderick starred as the teenage hacker whose inadvertent access into a massive U.S. military computer sets into motion a series of events that bring the world to the brink of World War III. Buoyed by a tight script, dynamic characters and a healthy dose of suspense, *WarGames* soared at the box office, grossing $74.4 million. Director John Badham hit a nerve with the America public. By focusing on the then-unfamiliar capabilities of computers, Badham crafted a movie that played on the public's Cold War mentality coupled with the fear that technology could eventually surpass human potential.

WarGames portrayed the computer as the object of terror, a great unknown villain out for world domination. Yet, in a brilliant stroke by Badham, Broderick defeats it by teaching the machine to play tic-tac-toe against itself. A computer with enough memory to begin a nuclear holocaust is rendered impotent by a child's game.

Move years ahead to 1995. With computers now commonplace, people don't so much fear technology as they embrace it, evidenced by the millions using the Internet daily. As a result, a whole new market is opening for the major studios. Computers alone can't be the villain now. As the recent rash of computhrillers demonstrates, the people who manipulate computers, rather than the actual hardware, have become the villains.

"The Net" typified Hollywood's effort at tackling the techie market. Sandra Bullock, Hollywood's attempt at a computer geek's pin-up, plays the wholesome, yet attractive software analyst who stumbles across a diskette that allows entry into worldwide corporate and government computer systems. In *The Net*, the enemy is not the computer on which Bullock types, but the evil corporation, manifested by a hitman on her trail. As the film proves, our cultural fears no longer revolve around technology's seemingly limitless capacity. Instead, *The Net* attempts to transfer our fears to compucrats like Bill Gates and nebulous organizations of evil (not unlike James Bond's nemesis C.H.A.O.S.) and their attempts to control cyberspace.

By Garrick Schmitt

THE DUBIOUS FACE-GLAZING SCREEN REFLECTOR IN *HACKERS*

Ironically, filmmakers' inability to successfully incorporate computers into their bag of tricks may be the result of the tedium associated with the current technology. Computers are still not completely user-friendly. They crash. They're too slow. And even those adept at maneuvering through codes and access numbers run into problems. Hollywood blockbusters have always been vehicles for escapism, a chance to flee from reality for a mere two hours. But those who use computers know the painful amount of "real time" one must spend logged on at a terminal to get anything accomplished. From secretarial work to data entry, the American populace associates little glamour with computers. Thus, when the studios attempt to incorporate special effects and high-tech gadgetry or dubious technology into their films, the American public knows that it is only a charade. Computhrillers ask us to believe that computers are as interesting as the stars who use them.

Hollywood should study its own past. Instead of building plots around gimmicks, they should stick to the character interaction and human effects. Computers should only be narrative devices, inanimate objects with monitors and keyboards. Instead of creating original stories, Hollywood has taken the low road. With a backlog of scripts and tired narrative twists, these computhrillers incorporate technology into films for the basest of reasons–to create a new market where they can rehash the same old plot. Just as *Bull Durham* prompted a host of baseball films and *Lethal Weapon* renewed the buddy-cop movie formula, film studios are hoping to reap success by beating the computer to death. So it goes in Hollywood, where artifice always wins out over artistry.

Maybe that's why Hollywood has yet to create a 'net-based film to win outright at the box-office. A quick glimpse at the box-office figures for recent computhrillers tells the tale all too well. *Virtuosity* even with Denzel Washington as a drawing card pulled in a meager $23.2 million. *Johnny Mnemonic*, a cyberpunk thriller starring Keanu Reeves, brought in less than $19 million. *The Net*, despite Bullock's rising star, checked in with a disappointing $47.7 million. *Hackers*, a flimsy story of a techno-brat pack (think *The Breakfast Club* battling evil on the streets of New York with modems in hand) performed especially poorly with $7.3 million at press time.

The leaders in the film industry should realize that only a fraction of the population knows the difference between gigabytes and megabytes or even cares to find out the difference. Slick high-tech gizmos don't mean as much to the American public as good stories. In *Clear and Present Danger*, one of the most suspenseful moments involves Harrison Ford sitting at a computer typing. It's not his action, it's not the evil computer that made the scene gripping; it was the plot and the character the audience learned to believe. Until Hollywood realizes technology is only as interesting as the people who use it and affected by it, computhrillers will continue to perform the way their desktop counterparts sometimes do—crash.

Film Flaws: Dubious Technology

We've all seen science-fiction movies depicting questionable advancements in technology, but what about those flicks that purport to reflect modern-day reality? Thanks to the continued recycling of Hollywood gags, dubious technology has become remarkably consistent, with the same ridiculous stretches showing up in films from *Rising Sun* to *Eve of Destruction*.

The face-glazing screen reflector: A staple of hacker movies, this impossibility somehow manages to turn screens into overhead projectors, launching whatever is on the computer onto the surprisingly reflective faces of the operators. The reflector shows up most often in suspenseful situations, including high-tension moments in *WarGames*, *Hackers* and *Sneakers*. Also often used on posters to confirm that "Yes, computers are in this movie."

The Mysterious Graphic Database of Everyone: Probably the most overused absurdity, this mythical listing not only has facts on everyone ever born, it also contains a comprehensive series of graphics. Featured prominently in *Basic Instinct*, we were led to believe the state of California uploaded everyone's driver's license (complete with haggard photo) onto some unknown system. The Database also showed up in *Sleepless in Seattle*, when Meg Ryan discovers ridiculously personal information about Tom Hanks through a Nexis/Lexis database.

The amazing image regenerator: This recurrent absurdity tries to convince audiences that destroyed or obscure images are recoverable with time, a plucky computer expert and a tight enough zoom. In *No Way Out*, the back strip of a Polaroid descends into new depths of pixels as the damning picture of Kevin Costner. In *Rising Sun*, a dark shadow reflected in a plate-glass window is translated into a clearly recognizable face with a few clicks of a mouse.

The easy animation quick-keys shortcut: More common in late-'80s teen flicks than today, this geek seduction tactic allows a computer-savvy character to sit down at any PC, slap a few commands into the keyboard and create a little guy that walks across the screen. This pick-up technique was used to woo women in both *Pretty in Pink* and *Revenge of the Nerds* with an amount of success unheard of by most C++ hobbyists.

The anti-gravity floating device: Used in almost every movie that takes place in space, this mysterious gremlin allows so-called "astronauts" to float around as if gravity never existed. Starting with *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a flick where humans walk across the moon (dubious at best) and continuing in *Apollo 13*, this ridiculous development pretends that space is devoid not only of air, but gravity! Thank goodness we had Flash Gordon to show us the truth. At least in the infinitely more believable *Moonraker* you could hear the explosions in space.

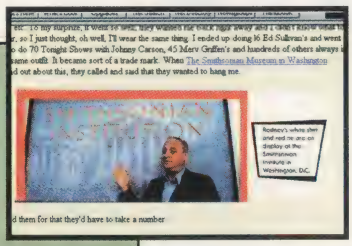
by Justin Ware

ON the net with...

RODNEY D Dangerfield

Early in October, after a hard day of surfing, I came across http://www.rodney.com, a site dedicated to the work and life of Rodney Dangerfield. Initially, I assumed this was a fan site, except that a couple of elements, like correspondence between Rodney and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, seemed like tough artifacts for a fan to scrape up. Figuring this was a lot of effort for a Rodney enthusiast to go through, I dropped the site some e-mail. Less than a day later

I got a note back—yes, this was really Rodney; yes, he does his own Web page; and yes, he's getting RealAudio for all those .wav files of his Joke of the Day. Finding a celebrity who not only knows about the Web but actually participates, especially at age 73, is quite a rarity. So IU *decided to talk to Rodney about his experience in cyberspace and answer the ultimate question: Could the star of* Caddyshack, Easy Money *and* Back to School *at least find some respect on the Web?*



RODNEY'S SITE SHOWS HE'S GOT SOME RESPECT ABOVE, A PHOTO OF HIS TRADEMARK RED TIE AND WHITE SHIRT ENSRINED AT THE SMITHSONIAN

The *Caddyshack* Star Looks for Respect in a New Arena

Internet Underground: What projects are you working on right now in real life? Can you tell us a little about the film you're currently shooting?

Rodney Dangerfield: I'm excited about my new talking book, *La Contessa*, where I reveal my torrid love affairs and also about my new movie, *Meet Wally Sparks*, about a scandalous talk show host. Burt Reynolds and Cindy Williams are in it and cameos are made by Michael Bolton, Jay Leno, Bob Saget, Tony Danza and Ron Jeremy.

IU: What was your first experience with computers?

RD: I thought, "Wow, who invented this?" Then, I pulled a muscle downloading.

IU: How did you get interested in the Internet and cyberspace?

RD: My wife showed me and I thought it was wild.

IU: How long has your Web site been up and who designed it? Who created your screen saver?

RD: I launched it in March. I decided the kind of stuff I wanted up there and had some help designing it from my wife and some computer guys at HLC-Internet and an independent consultant named Ken Johnson.

IU: Does having a Web site allow you to show more of your personality than more traditional media? What part of your site do you think best defines you as a person as well as an entertainer?
RD: Since it's my own personal site, I can say whatever I want and talk about my side of the story with the Academy rejecting me and AT&T saying I'm not dignified enough to represent them. Whatever I want to talk about... sort of a soapbox, I guess.

IU: How much e-mail do you get? Do your fans actually believe that it's you? Are people surprised that you have a 'net presence?
RD: People are surprised, and when I do answer, sometimes they write again and say "Only the real Rodney would answer like that," and other times they don't think it's me at all. I get hundreds of letters a day and pick out some good ones to answer.

IU: Has being on the Internet and having e-mail given you any new jokes or material for your routine, and if so, what are they?
RD: One guy sent me a joke I liked. I bought it from him, but it's too dirty to quote here.

IU: Do you e-mail other celebrities? What is the general Hollywood reaction to cyberspace?
RD: I've sent messages to a few and they never answered back. I can't speak for "general Hollywood," but I'm still learning my way around cyberspace. It's all new to me, too.

IU: What are your favorite Web sites?
RD: I like the idea of Virtual Vegas and RealAudio. And I'll give my wife a plug: visit her site at jungleroses.com.

IU: What's the weirdest e-mail you've ever gotten?

RD: Someone sent a pornographic photo once in response to something I said through e-mail. At the time, I didn't know you could send photos so it came as a real surprise.

IU: Where is your computer set up and what does the surrounding environment look like?
RD: My computer sits on the credenza behind my desk. The microphone for the computer is propped up on a comedy award statue. All this is in my living room. My wife decorated the whole place.

IU: Even in this new medium, do you still get no respect?
RD: No respect at all, are you kiddin'? I never had any luck with computers. I bought an Apple. It had a worm in it!

RODNEY AND HIS FRIENDS

Rodney with his best friend and wife Joan.

RODNEY'S GALLERY COVERS FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Rodney in high school!

A LITTLE RESPECT FOR RODNEY'S SITE

If the fact that Rodney Dangerfield has a presence on the Web doesn't surprise you, the quality of his site will. With enough links for even the most die-hard Rodneyphile, Rodney's home page includes everything from downloadable screen savers to a picture of Rodney's famous white shirt and red tie at the Smithsonian (plus, the inside story on why he wore the combination for years). Here are our favorite Rodney remnants:

The Contests: Actually, Rodney gives away good prizes, but then again, some of the responses are pretty ripe material for his comedy routines. The October contest brought the Haute Couture Makeover Contest, a competition asking visitors to offer suggestions on how Rodney could shift away from his typical red tie and white shirt fashion ensemble into something a little more hip. First prize: an autographed red tie, his three-volume video collection and an autographed copy of his new book, *No Respect*.

Rodney Done Wrong: A link to Rodney's rejection letter from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, citing a lack of "the kind of roles that allow a performer to demonstrate the mastery of the craft." The letter, signed by Roddy McDowall (star of such illustrious industry standards as *Fright Night, Part II* and *Gobots: Battle of the Rock Lords*) is uploaded in all its terse glory, along with several articles about the snub. An acceptance letter eventually arrived, providing the basis for one of Rodney's contests: What to do with the belated invitation?

Rodney and His Friends: This section offers a photo album with some strange inclusions. Check out pictures of Rodney in high school, Rodney with his wife Joan, Rodney with his horse—then, once you're done with this window into Rodney's life, download some shots of Rodney with a random selection of celebrities ranging from Jim Carrey to Steven Spielberg to Norman Schwartzkopf.

"I THINK SHE HAD A SAD LIFE. Maybe THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES HER SOMEWHAT appealing. SHE HAD A RATHER AWFUL BEGINNING, BEING SHUFFLED AROUND BETWEEN FAMILIES," SAYS ELLEN COTTON. "IN THE END, SHE REALLY GOT lost IN MARILYN MONROE AND SHE NEVER GOT BACK."

In her Web site, The Marilyn Pages at http://ionet.net:80/~jellenc/marilyn.html, Cotton gently pulls the viewer through a haunting narrative of Monroe's life, from her early days as the lonely Norma Jean Baker to the star's suspicious death on Aug. 5, 1962.

Cotton put up her site in late August after retiring as a graphic artist at Tinker Air Force Base near Oklahoma City. She had tired of wandering around the house trying to do "retiree" things.

"My interest has always been in photography and I was very serious about it. To me, this site represents a marriage between my graphic arts experience and my photography and the fact that I got interested in computers."

As a teen, Cotton worked in a local theater so she could see movies for free. Monroe, then in her heyday, always enchanted her. Cotton saw Monroe's life as everyone else envisioned it: glamorous and pampered, the stuff of dreams. Only years later did Cotton learn Monroe suffered from psychological problems and drug addiction, trapped in a difficult and lonely life.

"She was basically an unhappy person, even though she was so beautiful. As a star, I think she was underrated. I don't think she ever really made the serious movies she wanted to make. Even in *The Misfits*, they changed scripts on her all the time. She had no chance to really pick her movies the way stars do now."

In her site, Cotton respectfully weaves text and photos into a narrative of Monroe's tragic life. Cotton searched special-order photo houses to find rarely used images of the ethereal star to mix in with more classic shots. At the end of the site, Cotton links to other Monroe memorabilia and related pages, including a site to order stamps of the bombshell.

The text of her site does not speculate on Monroe's death. On the phone, Cotton said she doesn't believe Monroe committed suicide, but she doesn't think it was murder, either.

"I believe it was an accident, whether it was by her hand or another, we'll never really know. It could have even been her psychiatrist, who gave her some drugs to calm down and it was too much. Maybe it was the Kennedys, maybe the Mafia, but I genuinely think it was an accident."

Cotton lives in Moore, Okla., a suburb of Oklahoma City. She got online in 1988 with a local SLIP provider. Her friends don't understand when she talks about her Web page.

"Well, it's hard to explain the Web to people who have never seen it. You say, 'It's kind of like a magazine...' but they look at you with a blank stare."

The Marilyn Pages branch from Cotton's home page, which displays an innovative use of graphics and an eclectic collection of her other online work. That includes a feature on Dallas, a tribute to Will Rogers and an excellent download of Salvador Dali's painting *The Last Supper*.

At her age, Cotton thinks she's a minority in the world of Web pages. "It seems like everyone else is so young, but I don't care. I like doing this. I might do Amelia Earhart next."

Blond Rendition

The Crime Scene Case

She was

a young woman,

brutally murdered...

Or was she?

by Kathleen Flinn

The murder of Valerie Wilson in a small Mississippi town was not the sort of crime that would capture national attention, except, perhaps, for the brutal and somewhat bizarre events surrounding her demise. Wilson's killer shot the 26-year-old aspiring actress once, then bathed her and dragged her into the kitchen, where she was repeatedly stabbed and mutilated in the lower abdomen, notes a coroner's report.

Exhibit A: Wilson performing in the play "Lips Together, Teeth Apart."

From the beginning, detectives suspected Wilson's boyfriend, Greg Giblin. Six years her junior, Giblin met Wilson in the summer of 1993. Her friends didn't seem to know him well; even his own parents were unclear where he was working. He disappeared April 2, the day Wilson's lifeless body was discovered by a neighbor.

Weeks later, the beaten and bloody body of Giblin's brother was discovered in a Miami hotel room. Had Giblin gone on a killing spree?

Detective L. Armstrong of the Yoknapatawpha County Sheriff's office was frustrated at the lack of progress in the investigation. An online enthusiast, he persuaded his superiors to let him put much of the ongoing investigation's information on a Web site at http://www.quest.net/crime/crime.html. He included interviews with witnesses and photos from the crime scene such as close-up shots of the

blood-splattered refrigerator door, marijuana paraphernalia found in her bedroom and even the Prozac and birth-control pills she kept in her purse. Also included was a video snippet of a taped interview for the TV show *Unsolved Mysteries* with the two women who last saw Wilson alive.

While details of a more famous double murder kept some viewers glued to their TV sets, the accounts of Wilson's gruesome death captivated a quiet, growing audience. Visitors to the Web site could cull through the information and compare hair strand evidence photos. They could read a letter from the Trojan Company, tracing the lot number of an opened condom found at the scene to Oxford, Miss. convenience stores. Then, on a separate page, they see surveillance photos showing Giblin buyin condoms the day before the crime.

After they finish, visitors can write in their own remarks, theories or offer tips. A few pointed out puzzling inconsistencies in the evidence. A DNA expert offered her thoughts on samples picked up at the scene. Criminology experts wordwide have presented their conclusions.

Reader comment, Oct. 5: This is a tragedy that I just happened to come across, and I'm deeply moved by the crime. It almost reads like a "Clue" game and at times I kept asking myself if it was real. It seems real enough.

All this interest in a crime investigation online would mark a breakthrough for forensic investigations, except for one thing: Wilson is not dead.

In fact, she's alive and well and living in Petaluma, Calif., where she moved with Giblin, her supposed killer in late September. Detective Armstrong? He's Tom Arriola, a 36-year-old experimental theater director who was living in Oxford when he cooked up his crime scene. "I got tired of dialogue. I wanted to find a way in which theater could incorporate drama beyond mere words and evoke emotion." At his site, viewers look at a story, watching it unfold from a variety of perspectives with a number of elements to move it forward. Nowhere in his site does Arriola note that the investigation is not real. That's part of the drama. Without that knowledge, many visitors express their horror about such a promising life snuffed out in such a degrading fashion. Many wrote they were shocked or deeply saddened by what they had viewed.

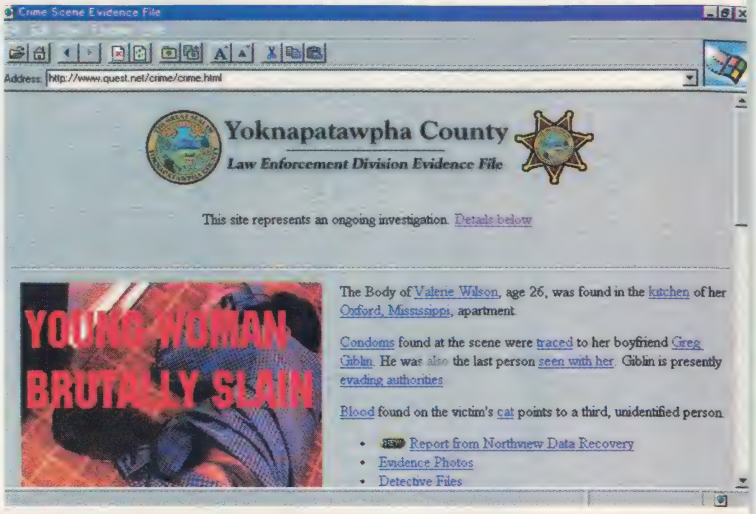


Exhibit C: Nowhere does the site say it's theater, not a crime.

"I used to feel bad that I tricked these people and made them upset," Arriola says. "This reminds me of when realism hit the theaters; no one knew how to react. But rules for this sort of things are not made yet. We're still teaching people the conventions of how to behave in the theater of the Web."

Wilson says she did not understand how the Web worked when Arriola approached her about playing a bloody corpse on his kitchen floor. An actress who met Arriola at the University of Mississippi, she had worked with him on other productions and learned to trust him. "Only Tom; if anyone else would have asked me, I would have thought, 'What kind of freak are you?' But I was afraid at first that someone would call my mother in St. Louis and tell her that I was dead. So I had to call her first. But it's funny. When I was still living in Oxford people would come up to me and say, 'Oh, so you are alive.'"

Arriola says it wasn't his intent to deceive or fool people, but rather to draw them into the scene that he created. Part of it was inspired, he says, by his mother's interest in *The Pelican Brief*. Wouldn't it have been

"If we're going to charge this guy with impersonating an officer, then why don't we go arrest Don Knotts? He played Barney Fife for 20 years."

- Oxford, Miss. Police Chief Stephen Bramlett

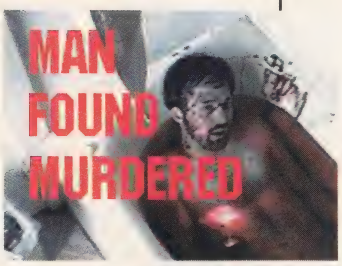


Exhibit B: The site's creator posing as the brutally beaten brother of Giblin.

great for her to be able to go through that whole file herself, he thought?

So Arriola decided to combine it with another of his specialties, interactive theater. The names in the site are real, so are the biographical facts about Wilson and her killer. He allowed Giblin to choose how he would kill his girlfriend. "I had originally considered getting a sponsor for the site, but then he did all this sexual mutilation stuff and I realized I couldn't."

Giblin says he added the mutilation for two reasons: to get the audience emotionally involved and to add a bit of intrigue and layers of necessary elements to investigate. "For some reason, violent death seems to draw in an audience, even though that's kind of awful," Giblin says.

The site's hits varied, fluctuating from day to day. When it was selected as Cool Site of the Day, more than 100,000 visited, which crashed the server. Later, Arriola's service provider politely banned him. That wasn't his only trouble.

Exhibit D: Surveillance photos of the suspect in a local store.

Prodigy unwittingly helped fuel the site's legitimacy. In late summer, the online service highlighted the site on its daily lineup, noting that it was a real murder investigation. That day, Arriola's site had more than 20,000 hits, mostly from Prodigy members. Many expressed shock at what they saw. One member found out that it wasn't authentic when she called Oxford Police and was upset to find she had been fooled.

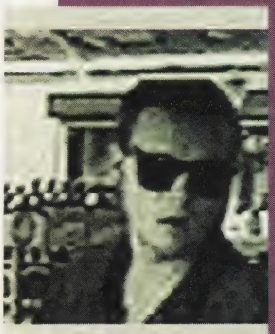
At one point, Oxford Police got a little annoyed and considered whether Arriola could face any charges. What would they charge him with, anyway? Impersonating an officer? Fraud? Filing a "false" report? In the end, they decided he had not really broken any laws, says Oxford Police Chief Stephen Bramlett.

"Is that fraud? I don't know. Who are the victims? People who spent a little extra money downloading the stuff?" Bramlett asks. "It wasn't like he was impersonating an officer to the general public, trying to gain their confidence so that he could get some personal benefit. If we're going to charge this guy with impersonating an officer, then why don't we go arrest Don Knotts,? He played Barney Fife for 20 years."

Bramlett knew immediately something was up when people started calling with offers to help their murder investigation. The quiet Mississippi town of just under 10,000 residents hasn't had a homicide since 1993. "We have one every seven years, so we're not due until the

What's In a Name?

Yoknapatawpha County, the purported area in which the murder of Karen Wilson took place, does not exist. Tom Arriola did not make it up, however. William Faulkner, who lived in Oxford, used it in a couple of his books. One of the site's visitors stumbled upon the truth in a posting in September...



"What is your understanding of the motto of your great seal, 'Veritas Faulkner,' which translates 'In Faulkner is truth.' Since Faulkner is not a Latin word, and I can hardly imagine you endowing one of your founding fathers with the attribute of embodying 'truth.' I wonder if this is a way of tipping your hat to William Faulkner, and tipping your hand at the same time. I admit I have run the name of your county 'Yoknapatawpha' through an anagram decoder and did not turn up much..."

Yoknapatawpha County
Law Enforcement Division Evidence File

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Curious about the already-hyped *Independence Day*, due out next summer? Cinescape's preview will give you a taste of the movie's fireworks

Plus: What's new on video and the latest in interactive entertainmentertainment.

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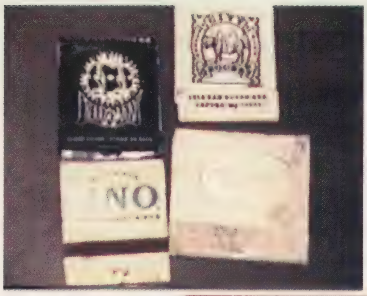
year 2000," Bramlett says. People still call, earnestly trying to offer some advice. Bramlett now just sees the whole issue as comically annoying.

Many calls to both the police and to Arriola came from reporters and TV producers, from local stations to the Discovery Channel. Many journalists were duped. One reporter from a Texas paper had already booked her flight to do a story on solving crimes the 21st century way when Arriola told her, apologetically, that the site was just fiction. She canceled her trip.

When the trio was interviewed for a Tennessee station, Giblin decided to toy with one of the reporters by acting as if the site had wrought havoc with his life. He wore dark sunglasses and told them he wished people would just leave him alone. He made it sound as if he was being hounded by people recognizing him from the site.

In reality, he's never had anyone approach him about the crime site,



Exhibits E, F and G: from top: Matchbooks from local bars, some of the evidence from Wilson's purse; above: Blood splatters on the fridge at the "scene"; bottom: A fabricated letter from Trojan

given to them at face value in this society. Doing this site made me lose faith in the news media. Maybe it's common knowledge to other people, but it didn't come to me until now."

Wilson says that when readers started responding with comments about how upset they were by what they viewed, she felt sad. After all, these were nice people simply concerned that her life had ended so tragically.

"It's interesting how willing people are to believe what they see. I felt kind of bad since I was supposed to be the dead person; some were really concerned about what happened to me," Wilson says. "But what can you do? It has to look real. If Tom had put a disclaimer at the top, it would not have been as compelling."

Readers alone did not just fall for the site. *America's Most Wanted* repeatedly called and e-mailed Arriola, asking him to help put the Wilson case on their show, he says. Arriola reluctantly talked to them after avoiding one of their producers, then told them it was not a real case. "They kept asking how I had arranged to release so much information with the district attorney's office. I think they were upset at first, but then they kept asking us a lot of questions about how we did it and what it took to get it online. Maybe

'I'm always waiting for some crazy hick to jump out at me screaming, 'hey you're the one who killed that girl, you crazy bastard!'

- Suspected "killer" Greg Gilbin

which may seem to indicate that online crime-stoppers may not be that effective. "I'm always waiting for some crazy hick to jump out at me screaming, 'Hey you're the one who killed that girl, you crazy bastard!' It's not like I'm waiting for a bullet, but yeah, sometimes I do worry."

Arriola believes that the news media may be one of the reasons why people are so quick to believe his site is for real. The media taught them to be gullible, he says. "When they see it on the screen, people just assume that it's true. I could take my own hometown of Schnook, Mont., and give it a 1 million population and people wouldn't question it. So many just take what's they will do it themselves."

Sept. 9, reader's comment: This guy is obviously a psycho. I hope you catch him.

Arriola doesn't know if the murder of Karen Wilson will ever be solved or even have a conclusion. He thinks of it as sort of an online *Twin Peaks,* a show he wished had not decided to wrap up all the odd, loose ends. Instead, *Twin Peaks* creators ought to have let that story go without closure, Arriola says.

He expects it to end the way it started, on something of a whim. Perhaps Giblin will jump off the

TROJAN-ENZ
A Division of Carter-Wallace
Inventory Division

To: Detective Anderson
From: Mike Nichol
Re: Condom Lot #2732003

Detective Anderson:

The condoms bearing the lot #2732003 were shipped to Marquis Industries in Seattle, Washington. I talked Bob Lentzner with Marquis. He told me that the condoms in that lot shipment went to the Conner's Chevron Supply. The Conner operation doesn't track lot numbers, but they supply 6 Mississippi stores; two in Oxford, two in Batesville and two in Jonsboro.

As for your other question, I have included a sample pack of our major brands. If I can help you further, please let me know.

Evil twins and mysterious comas:

Oh, what a criminal mind can create

Tom Arriola's next endeavor will not be as gruesome as his crime scene. Actually, fans of the show *Soap* will feel right at home at Arriola's new production, Ferndale. An online soap opera with a heavy dose of comedy mixed with some drama, the site will feature six eccentric characters living in a therapeutic community nestled in a naturally relaxing setting near an ominous wood.

All of the main characters will live in what Arriola calls "a digital glass house." Similar to last summer's online hit The Spot, users will have the opportunity to read the participants' journals and supplemental materials to gain entry into the Ferndale locale and mindset. But his site will go further. "Video cameras will be set up everywhere at Ferndale," Arriola says. "If someone gets a telephone call, then it will be 'recorded' so that you can hear it on RealAudio. There will be no privacy at all." Unlike The Spot, which relied on the drama of the interpersonal relationships among the characters, Ferndale will be fueled by planned intrigue. The plot lines will be familiar to anyone who watches the day-time soaps: evil twins, people going in an out of mysterious comas and forbidden romance. Early on a character will disappear into the nearby wilderness. Almost from the start, the story will center around a mystery that will take months to solve, Arriola says.

Exhibit H: Arriola, hot on a new case at Ferndale

"I will be the puppet master, moving all these characters and deciding what will happen," Arriola says. "If I decide I just don't like someone, I can kill them off. It's great."

Also different from The Spot will be the interaction available with the "residents" of Ferndale. All of the people who check into the site will be encouraged to contact Ferndale residents directly. A full-time staff of actors representing the characters will answer their queries. The site is sponsored by Songline Productions, a joint effort by Global Network Navigator and America Online. Residents of Ferndale are tentatively slated to move into their Web site in early January at http://www.ferndale.com.

Golden Gate Bridge. Arriola moved to San Francisco in late September to start a new Web site for Songline Productions (see sidebar). The producers there hired Arriola based on his handiwork on the crime scene site and offered him a job putting together one of their new high-profile interactive sites. In a way, it shows another of the Internet's odd capabilities: It allowed an experimental theater director in a small rural town in Mississippi to get a job on the other side of the United States simply by putting up a page on the Web.

As the trio traveled to California, they stopped at tourist attractions to take photos. "We would stand near real families lined up for shots at places like the Grand Canyon. Then Giblin would walk in the background and we'd snap it. We plan to put it up on the site and pretend someone sent it into the police department. You know, like 'Hey, we were on vacation, got our photos back and this guy looks sort of like the killer.' Then have people copy that person's actions by sending in more photos."

Arriola's noticed that since he put up the site, more law-enforcement organizations seem to have established a presence on the Web. While his site chronicled a false crime, he thinks it's only a matter of time before legitimate groups, including *America's Most Wanted*, detail crimes and wanted killers in a similar fashion.

"This will happen for real one day. Sooner or later. Life imitating art. It happens all the time."

Sunday, Aug. 27: Dear sirs, I think you guys are great in putting this on the Web. It's America's Most Wanted *gone multimedia. We will probably see a lot more of this in the future. All police departments establishing a home page on the 'net. The links covering unsolved crimes on through to various public-relations projects will work wonders for law enforcement. WillAMW profile the case as well, or has it already been featured? Good luck in putting this case down.*

Response: We have been contacted by "America's Most Wanted." They have not scheduled the case for investigation.

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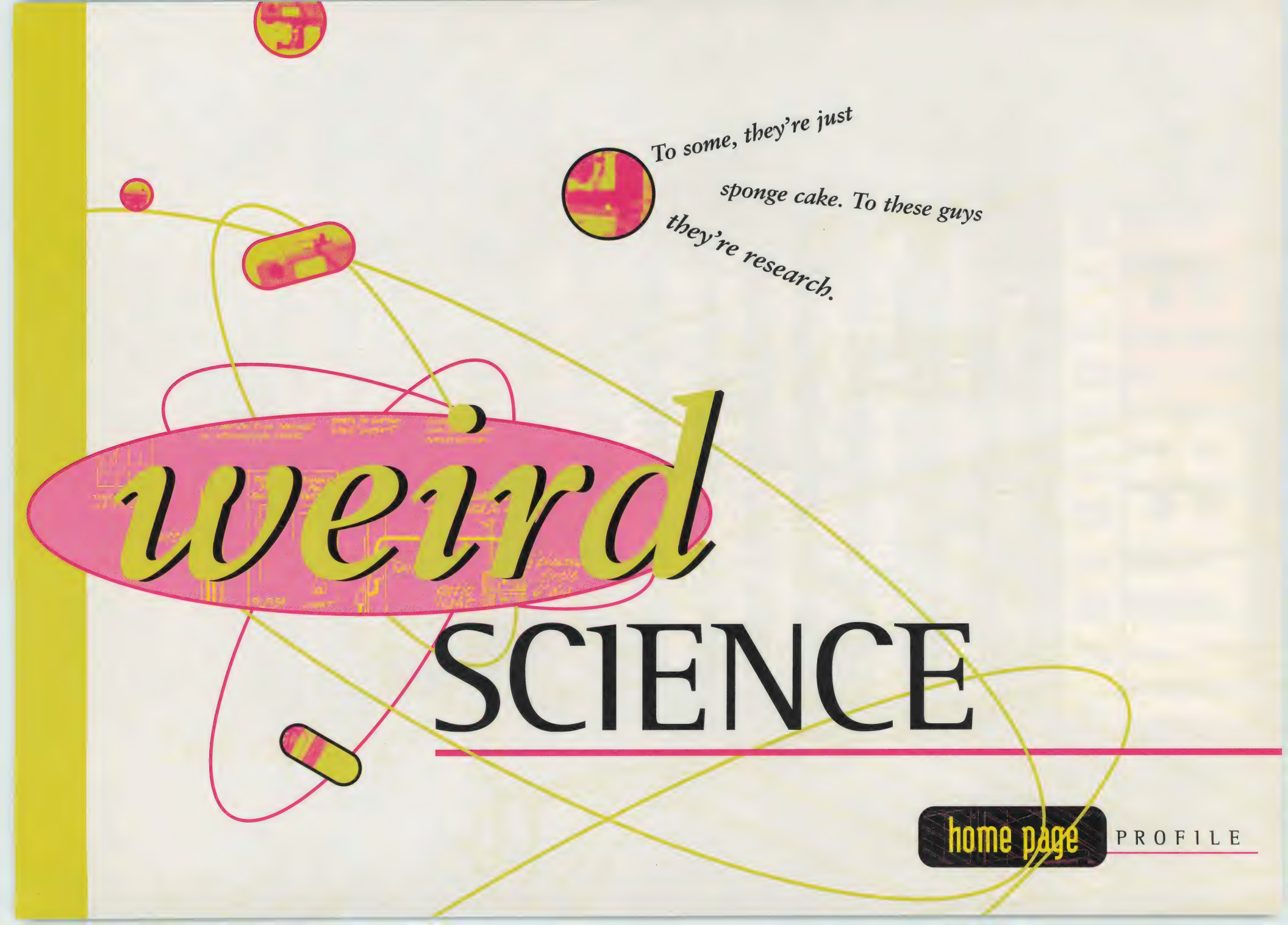


To some, they're just sponge cake. To these guys they're research.

weird SCIENCE

home page PROFILE

by Alex Gordon

With the volumes of legitimate scientific information available via the Internet, from the latest NASA research to exhaustive medical data, you might think that the experiments of two Rice University undergrads would go unnoticed. After all, how could their amateur findings compete for attention against established researchers sharing groundbreaking theories on ozone depletion and the mating habits of endangered species?

Yet both the scientific and lay communities are slowly beginning to recognize Chris Gouge and Todd Stadler as intrepid pioneers of a sadly neglected discipline. Kevin Hames of NASA praised the young duo's work: "Thanks for sharing your test results with the rest of the world. I believe that your data will be very important to NASA's Space Station Program."

Conceding to the politically correct climate on the Rice campus, the pair performed their experiments on test subjects that even the most rabid People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal zealots would applaud —

Twinkies.

The T.W.I.N.K.I.E.S. Project
http://riceinfo.rice.edu/~gouge/twinkies.html

Yes, Twinkies, those sugary cakes that originated with a forward-thinking Continental Bakery manager in 1930. The baker, noticing sponge cake consumption dropped with the end of strawberry season, conceived the idea of filling the cakes with the now legendary, sugary creme filling and the rest is junk food history.

Necessity might be the mother of invention, but in the case of Gouge and Stadler, it was finals week. "There's no inspiring ABC Afterschool-type story," says Stadler, a 20-year-old computer engineering major from suburban Dallas. The two were sitting around with a bunch of friends during finals basically procrastinating when the discussion turned to a now classic Web site, the Strawberry Pop-Tart Blow Torches (see sidebar). The duo decided to further the research in scope and subject, opting to experiment on the Twinkie for its status as pop icon.

What followed were four days of intense research in which the pair put Twinkie after Twinkie through a battery of conventional tests that included dropping one six stories to record its "gravitational response" and liquefying another to test its maximum density. (Amazingly, they discovered Twinkies were 68 percent air.) The young scientists were able to complete their experiments successfully despite being hampered by observers attempting to consume the control subjects.

The last test was perhaps the most unusual: Gouge and Stadler compared the intelligence of a Twinkie to that of a human subject. As they note on their site, "we decided to do this test last, because we killed a lot of (Twinkies) during these experiments and didn't want to know (if they were intelligent) before the other tests were over."

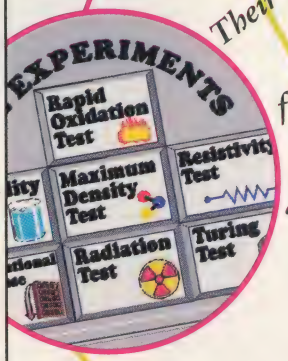
Gouge and Stadler slightly modified the Turing Test, normally used to examine computers' potential for artificial intelligence. Typically, the test compares computer-generated responses with those of a human to track how closely the two "minds" think. The pair had to abandon their first test after the human subject ate the Twinkie subject. When the test was administered with a new human test subject, Dave, and a non-eaten Twinkie, the undaunted scientists discovered...well, I don't want to give that answer away.

Once the results were in, the pair posted them on the Web under the name the T.W.I.N.K.I.E.S. (Tests With Inorganic Noxious Kakes In Extreme Situations) Project. The researchers were caught by surprise by the overwhelmingly positive response they received. The site garnered so much buzz that Stadler overhauled the text and graphics to make it more user-friendly during downtime at his internship with a major telecommunications company (Stadler declined to further identify the company lest his boss discover that he actually had downtime).

The redesigned site should serve as a guideline for more "serious" scientists who publish their research on the 'net. In addition to separate pages that fully illustrate each experiment, Stadler succinctly summarized their findings in the form of a haiku.

"twinkies don't burn well
unless doused in alcohol
then they make good fires"

Stadler says he chose haiku over a more traditional approach to writing up lab results because "it's a funny kind of poetry that lends itself to be used in silly ways."



Their pair had to abandon the first test after the human subject ate the Twinkie subject.

Before Twinkies came Pop Tarts

The T.W.I.N.K.I.E. Project owes much to the ground-breaking research of Patrick R Michaud and the Strawberry Pop-Tart Blow Torches site at http://www.sci.tamucc.edu/~pmichaud/toast/. Working on a tip from syndicated columnist Dave Barry, Michaud was able to prove that not only do Strawberry Pop-Tarts make delicious and nutritious breakfast treats, frosted or plain, they also make inexpensive incendiary devices. His experiment was done with a sacrificial toaster, some heavy-duty tape and Kellogg's Strawberry Pop-Tarts. Michaud's Web page meticulously details his experiment in the form of a lab report based on his flaming pastry hypothesis. One complaint: Michaud proves not to be as thorough a scientist as the Twinkie twosome, leaving open the question of why only the strawberry variety may be flammable. Could this incomplete data leave the door open to other experimenters? As the site hasn't been updated in over a year, perhaps his omission is a challenge to budding researchers to venture onward in this brave new world of food experimentation. Or, perhaps he just couldn't afford a new toaster.

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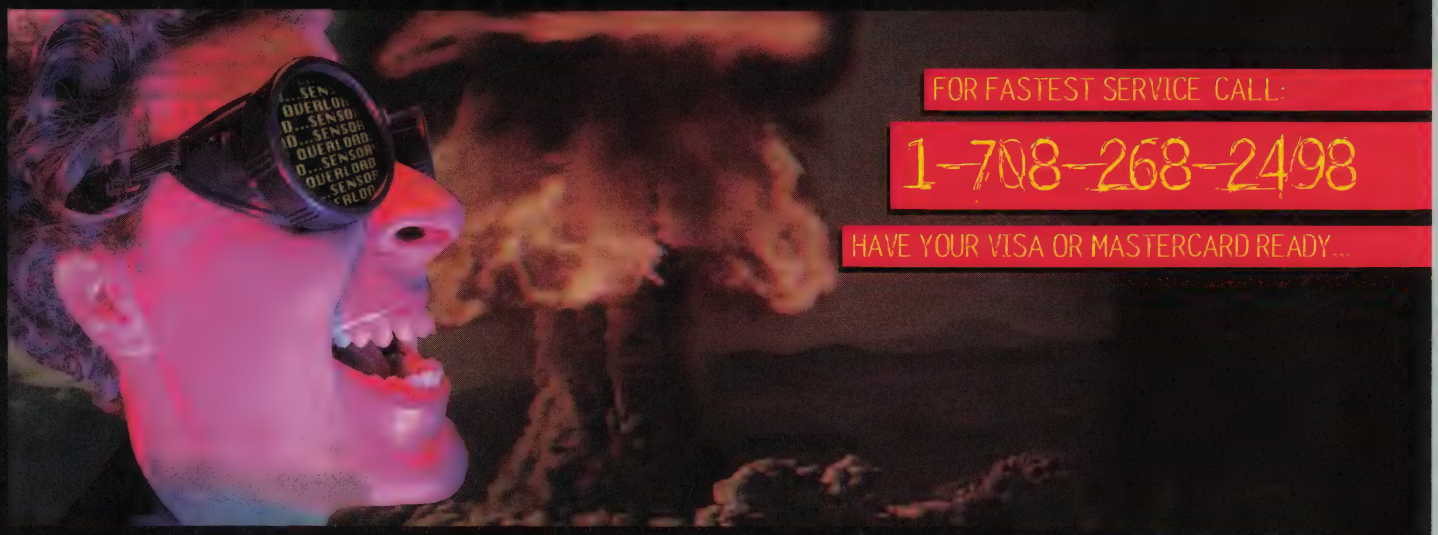

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The duo say they receive some really lame e-mail suggesting stuff such as "Wouldn't it be cool if you did the same test with a HoHo's or a Suzy-Q's" for future tests. The two have discussed more advanced tests such as tensile strength or liquid nitrogen, but what will determine their scientific future is how hard their classes are this semester.

The two say they both enjoy the fame and recognition the T.W.I.N.K.I.E.S. Project has brought them both on the Rice campus and on the 'net. Gouge, a 20-year-old computer science and cognitive science major from Austin, Texas, was recently on a blind date when his escort discovered that he was *the* Chris Gouge. "It gave us something to talk about," Gouge says.

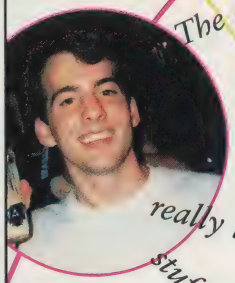
The page has even captured the imagination of a group of scientists in Sweden who love the page despite the fact that Twinkies are an unknown substance in Scandinavia. This may just prove the universal humor and appeal of the too often unheralded Twinkie. After all, who would visit a Web page in which University of Stockholm students tested lutefisk?

As of press time, the pair had yet to receive an official response from Hostess, but they did send in proof-of-purchase seals to garner official Hostess Twinkie T-shirts.

Ironically, the Twinkie is not the preferred junk food of either student. Gouge reaches for Hostess Cupcakes ("the chocolate gets me every time") when his blood sugar levels off, while Stadler prefers Ding Dongs (or King Dongs as they're inexplicably known in certain states).

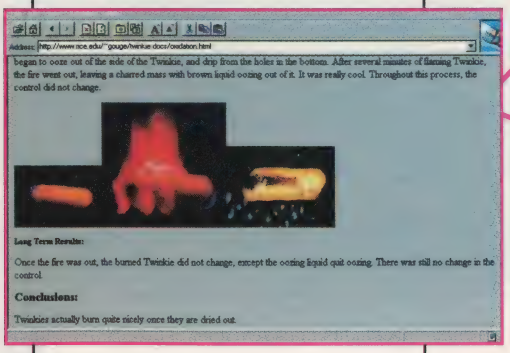
Gouge says they average three to four e-mails per day about the project, almost all positive. "A lot of people have sent us mail saying this was the best use of the 'net," he said.

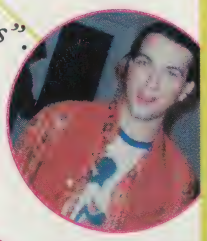
"Occasionally people tell us we have way too much spare time, but look at some of the other sites out there," Gouge says, "I mean an Erik Estrada home page, the Electrical Engineering Purity Test? Now those sites are scary."



CHRIS GOUGE

The duo say they receive some really lame e-mail suggesting stuff such as "wouldn't it be cool if you did the same test with HoHo's or Suzy-Q's".

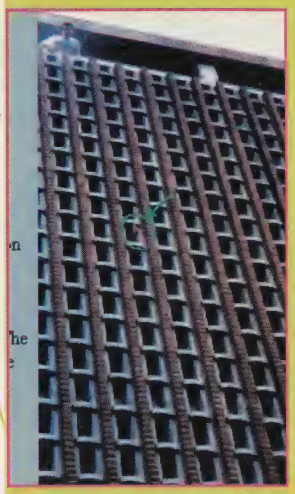




TODD STADLER

FROM THE GRAVITATIONAL RESPONSE TEST OF THE T.W.I.N.K.I.E. PROJECT

Test Subject: Standard Twinkie
Control Subject: Standard Twinkie
Test Location: First and sixth floor, Lovett College, Rice University
Start Time: Monday, May 1, 1995 14:21
Stop Time: Monday, May 1, 1995 14:37
Test Description:
To test the gravitational response of a Twinkie, one Twinkie was taken to the sixth floor of Lovett and released over the edge. This process was repeated twice on the same Twinkie.



Observations:
Before Test: Before the test, both the control and the experimental Twinkies appeared within the range that would be described as a "normal" Twinkie. It should be noted that there was a high wind during the test.
Immediate Results: As soon as the Twinkie was released, it began to fall. It fell until it hit the ground. Upon impact, there was a loud "splut" sound. A small crack opened on one side of the Twinkie. There was no noticeable change in the control.

The Twinkie was dropped again. The same "splut" sound was heard on impact. The fissure in the side of the Twinkie widened. Again, there was no noticeable change in the control.

For the "Long Term Results," "Conclusions," and "Possible Applications" of the Gravitational Response Test, you'll have to check the site out yourself at http://riceinfo.rice.edu/~gouge/twinkies.html

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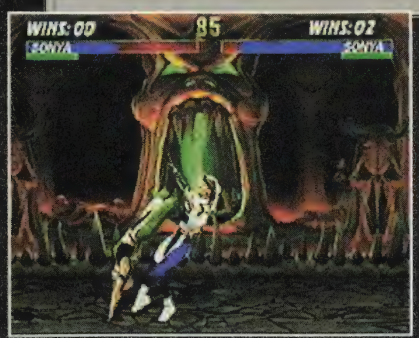

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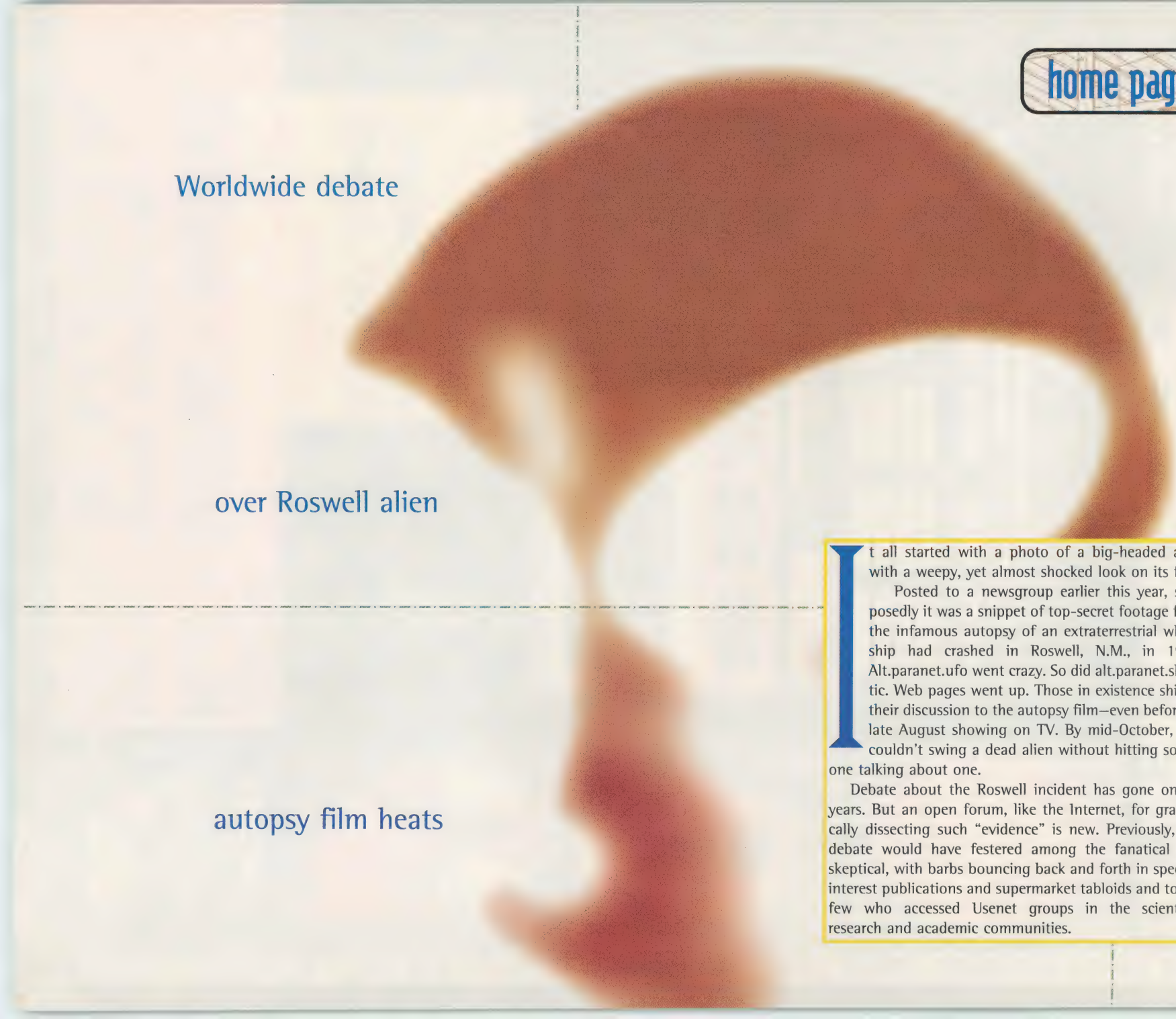
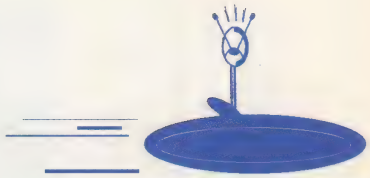
Worldwide debate over Roswell alien autopsy film heats



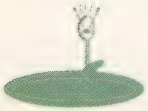
It all started with a photo of a big-headed alien with a weepy, yet almost shocked look on its face.

Posted to a newsgroup earlier this year, supposedly it was a snippet of top-secret footage from the infamous autopsy of an extraterrestrial whose ship had crashed in Roswell, N.M., in 1947. Alt.paranet.ufo went crazy. So did alt.paranet.skeptic. Web pages went up. Those in existence shifted their discussion to the autopsy film—even before its late August showing on TV. By mid-October, you couldn't swing a dead alien without hitting someone talking about one.

Debate about the Roswell incident has gone on for years. But an open forum, like the Internet, for graphically dissecting such "evidence" is new. Previously, the debate would have festered among the fanatical and skeptical, with barbs bouncing back and forth in special-interest publications and supermarket tabloids and to the few who accessed Usenet groups in the scientific, research and academic communities.



BY ARIZONA CLARK



ALIEN

stiff:

E.T. or F/X?

Now the Roswell case and the alien autopsies are among the best documented controversies on the 'net. CompuServe has a special forum and archives on the paranormal. The entire 24-page summary of the Air Force investigation that explains away the wreckage as a crashed balloon from the top-secret is available. Both sides are presented in "The 50 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time" web site at http://www.webcom.com/~conspire/curren16.html. Probably the most entertaining site debunking the film is the step-by-step "How to Make An Alien" site by special effects whiz Trey Stokes (see sidebar). After perusing through more than 300 pages from more than 20 sites and lurking on a half-dozen newsgroups on both sides *IU* discovered that all but the most die-hard Roswell believers—and even a couple of those—believe the film's a fake.

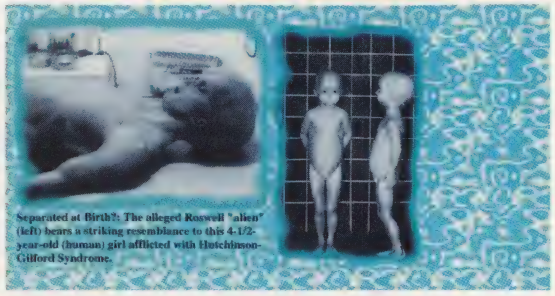
Most seem to agree it was an elaborate scheme to make some quick money. Others suspect a more sinister motive. One popular theory: The U. S. government, in a continuing attempt to cover up a crash at Roswell, developed the film with plans of debunking it as a hoax to knock the credibility of ufologists who have tried earnestly for years to find out what really happened in the remote New Mexico desert in 1947.

Consider this posting to alt.paranet.ufo in October: "The alien autopsy is a fake, sorry to say. But, you have to give the U. S. government credit for the effort they put in. Very good, high-quality stuff, if not convincing. But don't give up hope. It was all another attempt to break the psychological barrier they believe most people have about aliens."

UFO A-GO-GO

No one questions that something did crash in Roswell sometime in late June or early July 1947. A rancher found bits of an aluminum-type fabric, sticks, purplish tape with odd markings and a "black box"-type device. The government *did* report it had recovered a flying saucer at first. The next day, however, officials changed their story, saying it was just a weather balloon. No one said much about it until the late '70s, when rumors began to surface that the government had been covering up the recovery of an alien craft and four aliens at the site. But no one's had any proof and the government isn't budging from its story.

Enter Ray Santilli. The British film producer claims that while he was searching for some old footage of Elvis Presley, he contacted a retired military cameraman in Los Angeles. The cameraman told Santilli that he had footage from three alien autopsies he had filmed, two in 1947 and another in 1949. (One of the aliens supposedly lived for two years under the government's watchful eye before it died.) Somehow, the government never got around to getting 22 reels of negatives documenting most of the second procedure, which now sat in the old man's attic. The cameraman, who is said to have died in early September, sold the 91 minutes of 16mm film for an undisclosed price, absolutely swearing to Santilli it was authentic.



Separated at Birth?: The alleged Roswell "alien" (left) bears a striking resemblance to this 4-1/2-year-old (human) girl afflicted with Hutchinson-Gilford Syndrome.

THE ALIEN BEARS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO AN AFFLICTED CHILD

Most of the 21 minutes released so far show two doctors in white bio-hazard outfits mulling about and cutting open a chubby, big-headed creature. They remove the creature's organs, saw open the brain and take off the black eye lids, revealing human-like eyeballs. Few purport to have seen the much-discussed "tent" scene, documenting more of the crash debris and said to be swarming with military personnel. Incredibly, President Harry S. Truman is said to be viewed in this as yet unreleased segment. The debris in the footage available conflicts with eyewitness reports of the materials recovered in Roswell in 1947.

All this was shown in late August, when Fox aired "Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction," a one-hour special on the footage. The network paid big bucks to get North American exclusive rights. On the program, a few minutes of the autopsy are shown, interspersed with interviews of people within the UFO, paranormal and medical fields along with Hollywood special-effect artists. They also interviewed witnesses from Roswell, who described materials found. According to Stokes and some 'net newsgroups, one L.A. special-effects artist told Fox producers he thought the film was faked and explained how it could have been done, but his interview was cut from the special.

The Fox program also ignored some inconsistencies, such as why no still photographer was present. That would be standard in such a military autopsy, some experts have noted in newsgroups. The most conclusive evidence the FOX special offered was that William Frakes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* will do almost anything for a buck.

According to the cameraman (whom Santilli refuses to name), shortly after the crash, he was called to Fort Worth, Texas, to film the autopsy of one of the Roswell EBEs ("Extra-Biological Entities"). In the most suspicious part of the story, the cameraman claims that the military neglected to collect several cans of the exposed film footage--which sat in the now-elderly lensman's attic for nearly five decades. Of course, as more than a few skeptics

After doctors remove the black film, the "alien" appears to have eyeballs like any other human Joe Lunchbox.

PHOTOS FROM "THE 50 GREATEST CONSPIRACIES OF ALL TIME" WEB SITE

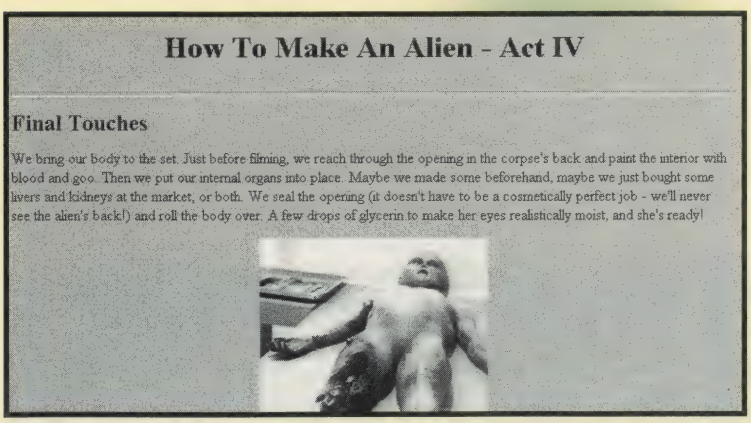
HEY, MOM, LOOK WHAT I MADE!

If you've got time, gumption and a little extra quick-drying oil clay, check out http://www.cinenet.net/trudang/autopsy.html and read "How to Make an Alien."

The site was developed by Trey Stokes, a special-effects expert who owns the Truly Dangerous Company in Los Angeles. Stokes, who has worked on movies such as the remake of *The Blob* and *Robocop II*, started the site after writing a letter to the *The Skeptical Inquirer*, when the group asked special-effects artists to analyze the broadcast of the autopsy.

"The first time through, it was like, 'Wow, I don't know,' but then I watched it repeatedly. By the time I saw it about five times, I knew what I was looking at," Stokes says.

He uploaded his letter, detailing his theory that the corpse was a not-too-impressive nor difficult Hollywood effect. The online version of *The Skeptical Inquirer* linked to his site. Other skeptics and UFO sites followed. He had to develop an FAQ. "Then it just started to grow because of the outside response to it. It's not worldwide fame or anything, but it's turned into this very strange thing."



ALL DRESSED UP AND NO PLACE TO GO: STOKES BELIEVES THE ALIEN'S A DUMMY

Very strange, indeed. When you check out Stokes' site, you'll learn the general guidelines on preparing three full-body casts, how to prepare the inside of a dummy so it appears to have organic, squishy organs and to give it six fingers. He also includes a guide to "Alien Autopsy Bloops and Blunders," which points out inconsistencies and mistakes.

"I felt like I had to do this. I was seeing postings in newsgroups saying, 'F/X people couldn't do this or they couldn't do that.' I thought someone ought to step up and say, 'Hey, we're not mystified at all by this.' Certainly there are people who have more experience than me in this industry. I'm just the only one who has a Web page."

After their initial links, his site was picked up by people in various newsgroups and as a link by pro-UFO newsgroups. "The e-mail that has come has been largely stuff like, 'great job, useful info.' Some have said, 'It's thought provoking, I'm still not sure.' Then we get some that are angry, saying we're wrong and that we're just trying to get some notoriety off this. But that's not the case," Stokes says.

Perhaps one hopes that if the alien autopsy is proven to be a fake, that Stokes is right about the body being a dummy. Otherwise, that leaves only one other possibility: an altered human corpse. Many doctors have noted similarities in the creature and real human deformities such as Hutchinson-Gilford Syndrome or Patau's Syndrome.

"If such is the case, it would make this one of the most despicable and deplorable hoaxes ever perpetrated. It would mean that those who put this atrocity together butchered the body of a once-living human being, a woman in this case, solely out of greed," notes Kent Jeffrey of the Roswell Initiative.

Most skeptics, including Stokes and *The Skeptical Inquirer,* think that's unlikely. After all, consider the difficulty in getting access to a corpse and at least three people willing to cover up the mutilation. What would they do with the corpse afterward?

"Why would you take that risk or go through that when it would be simpler to build a dummy and you could make it look however you wanted?" Stokes asks.

"Yeah, this is supposed to be a momentous event, the happening of a millennium and they're going to throw a guy a camera and say, 'Film what you can.' I don't think so," Stokes says.

Neither does the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, which plans to officially brand the autopsy film as a hoax in the December issue of *The Skeptical Inquirer* at http://iquest.com/~fitz/csicop/si/

"It's tough being a skeptic these days," says Barry Karr, executive director of CSICOP, which investigates all kinds of unusual phenomena. "With so many more channels of communications opening, there's more competition to attract readers, viewers or listeners. And the paranormal sells. No doubt about it. Plus, for some people, it's hard to give up their beliefs even in the face of solid proof," Karr says. "But hey, I'm a Buffalo Bills fan. For years I thought they'd win a Super Bowl, but I had to give that up, too."

Karr points out inconsistencies such as the lack of military personnel on the scene, the neglect of proper pathological procedures, reassurances by special-effects experts that they could produce a similar model and plain common sense as the basis of his group's conclusion.

"The alien in the autopsy isn't even consistent with other reports about Roswell," Karr says. "Other reports say the aliens had four fingers, this one has six."

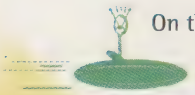
Regardless of whether the film is genuine or not, Santilli and his supporters have used the 'net and Web to their best advantage. They seem to have leaked "snippets" of film to newsgroups months before the film was set to release. A Web site specifically designed to sell the footage was established in the United Kingdom. Other UFO groups say they were encouraged to link to it, and many did. Santilli hosted chats on CompuServe's Encounters Forum all summer, creating a buzz about the August special and home video. A few minutes after the Fox program, viewers could turn off their TV and log into CompuServe for a moderated chat with Bob Shell, a consultant to the show, who as an independent photography expert, is convinced the film is genuine.

"Based on my investigation, I give a 95 percent scientific probability that the film was manufactured, exposed and processed in 1947. That's my professional opinion," Shell began the forum. People eagerly typed in questions for more than an hour. Asked why no one has seen the Truman footage, Shell replied: "It is on one of the rolls that are still stuck together and can't yet be unrolled."

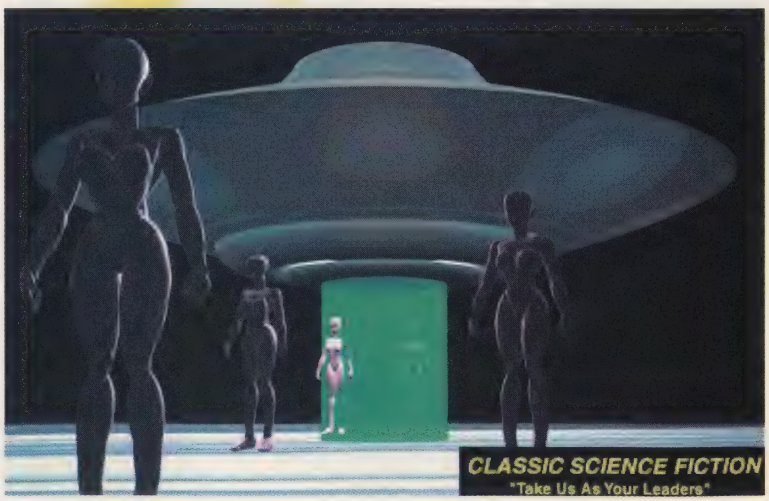
"The biggest single thing that says 'HOAX' to me is how they just WHALE right on through the autopsy...THINK about that ice man they found in a glacier. They hadn't finished that autopsy after a whole YEAR. And that's a human, they KNEW what they were going to find."

—TREY STOKES

UFO-O-RAMA



On the 'net, both serious researchers, hobbyists and the just-plain-curious have equal access to the debate. More importantly, they get a chance to buy the endless flow of tapes, books and other stuff related to ufology. The bandwidth is becoming the place for one-stop paranormal shopping. At Stanton T. Friedman's site, one of the few that seems to support the Roswell film as possibly authentic, you can buy his videos, *Flying Saucers ARE Real*, *UFOs ARE Real* and *The UFO Controversy*.



UFO BUBBLEGUM TRADING CARD FROM HTTP://WWW.RUTGERS.EDU/UFO.HTML

"Many of the persons making the biggest claims of 'alien bodies' make their living from the Roswell Incident," notes a military summary at http://www.inrs-ener.uquebec.ca/~paynter/paynter/afmogul.html.

"While having a commercial interest in something does not automatically make it suspect, it does raise interesting questions related to authenticity."

Santilli has sold the rights to the film in Britain, Brazil, Italy, Germany and Holland. Fox holds exclusive North American rights on the film. (Of course, if the footage is genuine, one would think the U.S. government would still hold the copyright, but that's another story.)

ell Daily Record
RAAF Captures Flying Saucer On Ranch in Roswell Region

NEWSPAPERS REPORT ON THE UFO CRASH IN THE NEW MEXICO DESERT IN THE SUMMER OF 1947

"The biggest single thing that says 'hoax' to me is how they just whale right on through the autopsy," Stokes says. "People have made excuses for this, saying this was the second alien autopsied. But even if it's the 10th one, scientists would still dissect it and that takes a little longer than an hour and a half. Think about that ice man they found in a glacier. They hadn't finished that autopsy after a whole year. And that's a human, they knew what they were going to find."

Roswell Daily Record
Gen.RameyEmptiesRoswellSaucer

It's possible that the UFO community may come to the same conclusion soon. The entire Santilli film, including the "tent footage," is slated to be shown at the Fifth Annual International UFO Congress and Film Festival and Extra-Biological Entities Awards near Las Vegas Nov. 25-Dec. 3.

If the pro-UFO groups deem it a hoax, earnest Roswell investigators expect it to be a setback in getting to the truth at what happened at a dusty, isolated ranch in July 1947. To help push sales of the video, the Roswell Centre site offers a copy of a top-secret document to President-elect Eisenhower from the "Majestic 12" project as proof that an alien craft did crash in Roswell. Karr says that even pro-UFO groups believe that the MJ-12 document is not genuine.

Despite his mocking of the alien in the autopsy, Stokes believes that the Roswell incident still should be investigated. "These are people who believe there is really something to be investigated," he says. "They are trying to be serious about it, but when something like this comes out, it muddies the water for what they are trying to do."

Karr believes that even with the film debunked, the issue of Roswell will not go away; believers have remained steadfast in the face of two exhaustive government reports stating nothing happened.

That's understandable when you consider that in the recent past, Americans have walked on the moon; 100 years ago that was thought impossible. The government who put him there covered up extensive radiation testing on humans, nuclear experiments and the Watergate burglary. There will always be a segment of society attracted to the lure of an enigma hidden within a complex mixture of intrigue and the unexplained.

"People love a conspiracy theory. It plays upon their natural distrust of the government. But what's weird is how things have changed. Back in the 1970s, with *The Night Stalker*, there was no question that this kind of stuff was not real," Karr says. "Now, with *The X-Files*, people really think that all this stuff is really true. That the government would cover it up seems plausible."

Hmmmm. Maybe the autopsy filmmakers should have gotten Agent Scully to do the job.

the cutting edge just got a whole lot sharper...

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Raw

The cover of *Instant Internet* struck my eye. "Connect to the Internet in five minutes or less with the Instant Internet software in this book." All right, I'm always game for a challenge. I installed the software in two separate time trials, using my zippy Pentium. The fastest was 14 minutes; the other was 21 minutes. Not less than five, but not bad for a full-featured program that allows you to use mail, FTP, gophers, Telnet and Web browser, then allows you choose your SLIP/PPP service from six independent service providers. We went with InterRamp, which had a local dial-up number from Chicago and offered a free seven-day trial period. The book itself offers clear instructions without a lot of jargon and in a non-cluttered format that provides a good overview of the various components of the Internet, although some of the ground covered in the book might be a little involved for people reeled in with an "instant Internet" pitch. The biggest drawback is that this book comes packaged with Chameleon. The program worked all right and the interface is user-friendly and complete. But compared to other software available that's either free or cheap (such as the Eudora mail program and Netscape) it's really hard for Chameleon to compete. Chameleon's Web browser needs desperately to be updated; it doesn't support backgrounds and pages constructed for use with Netscape 1.1 or higher look terribly "off." It's the problem that plagues all book bundled with software – the market is changing so frequently that the stuff becomes outdated by the time it hits the shelf. The best use of Instant Internet I can consider is for users of online services who want to move to an independent service provider but worry he or she won't be able to handle complicated configurations. Just make sure that while you're up on Chameleon's software surfing the 'net, make sure you pull down some freeware. - Kathleen Flinn

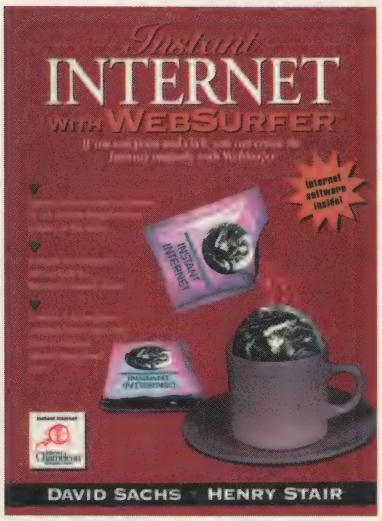
INSTANT INTERNET

BY DAVID SACHS AND HENRY STAIR

PRENTICE HALL

$24.95

★★★



Personally, I love newsgroups, so I was glad, to find that's the subject at the heart of *Planet Internet*. With the advent of the Web, many people seem to surf, staring at pretty graphics and think that's the most amazing thing about the 'net. Well, some of the truly great stuff on the 'net often comes in the form of clever, inspired writing displayed in newsgroups. Now, that's not often the case – I've seen some of the most juvenile, petty banter ever on newsgroups, too. Rimmer seems to have made an attempt to skirt around the bad groups, gophers and FTP sites and ferret out the good. I don't knock his choices. The graphics and layout of this book are wonderful, amusing and fun, yet not overwhelming to the text. But what frustrated me was that he surveyed just 150 of the thousands of newsgroups. Then Rimmer wrote *Planet Internet* in that irritating habit of many who write about the 'net, especially newsgroups. He writes a few paragraphs as explanation of the topic, then simply fills up the rest of the space with text he copied from the group's files. So a lot of this book isn't even written by Rimmer. I understand what he attempted to do, namely provide readers with the voice of the groups and, in turn, offer them a reasonable expectation of what they might find if they wandered into the groups or FTP sites themselves. Sometimes that's important for groups with nebulous titles such as alt.devilbunnies. But alt.aol.sucks? Or alt.sex.stories? Aren't those titles explanation enough? Do they really need an entire page of excerpts? Quite honestly, I use the index of another Internet book with newsgroups descriptions more than I actually use the book itself.

PLANET INTERNET

BY STEVE RIMMER

WINDCREST/MCGRAW-HILL

$24.95

★★★½

In a way, this book is refreshing if only to see someone put a little emphasis on something other than the Web. But why, when I flipped through these pages, did I get the feeling that this book was somehow put together before the Web hit the big-time? I thought perhaps Rimmer didn't know what it was until, then, voila, the proof. Nestled way in the back, a whole five paragraphs and few passing mentions of the Web in a discussion about on-line services. For those who have been on the 'net for any length of time, the information in this book won't be new. But for newcomers, it's not a bad introduction to the land beyond the Web. -KF

Resisting the Virtual Life, a collection of essays by academics, activists and professionals, offers a variety of opinions regarding the information superhighway. The book basically functions as a cold shower for those with the relentless optimism that this supreme access to information will create some kind of utopia.

RESISTING THE VIRTUAL LIFE

BY JAMES BROOK AND IAIN A. BOAL

CITY LIGHTS

$15.95

★★★★

In the first section, "The New Information Enclosures," the various writers suggest that the proposed National Information Infrastructure is not as democratic as people would like to think. Howard Besser's essay suggests the NII cannot reach its potential unless everyone has the ability to send information, not only the few entertainment giants.

Other sections concern themselves

INTERNET CONNECTION

MICROFORUM

$19.95

★★★½

We all know the type. They usually inhabit the dark recesses of a college computer lab, sitting in the office marked "consultant." They're knowledgeable, irritable (especially when you ask a question) and lack even basic social skills.

Most disgusting of all, though, is the supreme amount of time they have to search out all the hidden coves of the silicon sea and sail home to brag to their friends about it.

Those of us who have a life can't take the time to play modern-day Ulysses, so we must get back at the little geeks any way we can. Luckily, the marketing of the Internet has brought with it various guidebooks for sightseers and information seekers. The drawback with this approach is the ever-changing nature of the 'net. Archives are shifting all over the place; sites are going up and down. It's a mad world, and the print medium just can't keep up.

Microforum's Internet Connection is basically the Internet Yellow Pages on CD-ROM, with a nice menu system and a few multimedia touches to make you think that your Soundblaster wasn't a complete waste of money. Some short video clips introduce some of the screens. They maintain a generally jovial atmosphere throughout the proceedings so that even when one's looking for information about Stalin's regime of terror, a duck with an oversized mallet is guaranteed to bring a chuckle. They do slow the process, though, so the toggle switch is appreciated.

The test of such a guide, though, is the information within. While some subjects seem covered adequately, a few seem skimped on. Beyond that, there's still the problem of the static nature of a guide like this. It would be optimal if the user could add new discoveries and delete old sites, but there is no provision for something like that.

As it stands, this is a nice tool for users to have available on their Windows desktop, but it doesn't address the major problems that plagued its print brethren. There's still no substitute for gobs of free 'net time. -Ed Finkler

★★★★★ The Best

★ The Worst

VIEWS

with the loss of real human interaction due to technology, the drop of production in the workplace despite the speed of computers and the changes to everyday life caused by multimedia, cyberspace and digital technologies. Most of the essays offer fascinating glimpses into the dangers of new technology. Those few who become mired in "academic speak" grow tiresome but are outnumbered.

The finest essay is written by Ellen Ullman, a software engineer who relates the dehumanization of computer programmers. One co-worker of hers couldn't even speak while working and would only communicate through e-mail. It's a humorous yet ultimately frightening look at the lives led by people whose only friends are machines.

The book would have been served better by offering more insights from computer professionals like Ullman rather than the activists who dominate these pages. There's something more genuine about those who have seen the dangers of progress firsthand. Mostly, *Resisting* works as a reminder that a modem is not the key to paradise.

-Rob Kozlowski

THE MICROSOFT NETWORK

BY BILL GATES

COST VARIES

★★★★

When the IU staff reported to work in early September, we were greeted by speedy PCs already installed with Windows 95. Bill Gates is no dummy; put an icon on my desktop and I'll hit it just to see what it does. MSN has these extra long text lines for logins and passwords so we could make a cool one (the_underground@msn.com). It's a little more difficult to navigate at first then some on-line services. We were confused how to access newsgroups, for example. Two big tables that greet you each time you log in take far too long to load, as does Microsoft's home page. However, those issues aside, MSN worked well. Its Web browser seems to adapt to even Netscape-enhanced sites and it has an easy-to-use folder system to organize bookmarks. If you don't like their Web browser, MSN is compatible with Netscape. Plus, the network sponsors celebrity chats and has other cool services, such as an on-line reference shelf. Most of the time, we could multi-task easily, although once in a while we would overlap programs and have to go through the shut down program to stop a task when a program froze. MSN works with the Windows 95 mail program, which we like. If you leave without hitting keys for any length of time, it will disconnect so you don't run up expensive online time (a feature other on-line services seem to purposely lack). MSN also passed our customer service test: we were able to get an MSN representative at 7:30 p.m. on a Saturday night with less than two minutes on hold to answer our fictional technical question. The biggest flaw is the cost. That's our beef with all on-line services, although their frequent user program isn't bad at $19.95 for 20 hours per month. Additional hours are $2.50. We know we're underground and to some, Microsoft represents all that is mainstream in corporate America, but we can't help but say it's a good bet for moderate users. -KF

Now for the Net

The Touche Touch Pad

$59.95

The latest in the trend toward ergonomically correct computing, the Touche replaces the standard, curved computer mouse with a touch pad that allows you to glide your finger across a smooth surface in order to click and drag icons. The same kind of touch pads are de riguer for laptop computers. Studies have predicted that by 1998, roughly 70 percent of computers will use touchpads. Do yourself, and your wrists, a favor and check out the Touche pad at http://www.intl-tech.com/touche.

Motorola Personal Messenger 100

$750.00

You can run, but you can't hide with Motorola's lightweight wireless modem card for laptop computers. Now, no matter where you go, stay in touch and even venture on the 'net for up to three hours on a 9-Volt battery. The Personal Messenger uses the Ardis Network, the world's leading wireless data communications network. For more information call 1-800-8-WIRELESS.

Pivot 1700

$995.00

From Portrait Display Labs comes the Pivot 1700, billed as the world's most versatile 17-inch color monitor. By pivoting, the monitor allows you to choose the orientation that best suits what documents you're viewing or working on. For example, turn the monitor vertically when surfing the Web at work, then quickly flip it horizontally when the boss comes by to look like you're slaving over spreadsheets. Works for both Macs and PCs. 1-800-858-7744.

AnchorPage®

Discover the New World of Content-Driven Navigation

AnchorPage

$895.00

AnchorPage is the only fully automatic hypertext indexing software for the Web. Hypertext indexing is the foundation for content-driven navigation that, when used by Web administrators, will allow surfers the chance to quickly skim the contents of any document before downloading it. To learn more about AnchorPage see http://www.iconovex.com

>sysop

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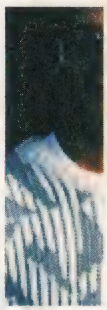
Each month, this column profiles the people who help maintain or oversee newsgroups, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), mailing lists, Inter-relay chat channels and multiuser domains. This month, the *Internet Underground* asked a few questions of the 15-year-old high school sophomore who maintains the FAQ and set up the Web page for the newsgroup alt.pave.the.earth. Their Web site can be found at http://www.solon.com/~gutt/pave.the.earth/pave.html

What's your group about?
alt.pave.the.earth is a group dedicated to self-fulfillment and the joy involved with paving the earth and driving really really fast, while eating cheeseburgers and drinking beer. We believe in the Plan™, which is a document that contains all the knowledge of the Pavers. We also hate environmentalists, Earth Destroyers (alt.destroy.the.earth) and time-wasting. We believe in the depletion of scarce natural resources and enjoy polluting the environment.

How did you get involved with it?
I got involved about a year ago with a very simple posting. After surviving some initial flames, I got involved and posted regularly. I eventually created PavePage, which is the official WWW site for the group and wrote Version 2.0 of the FAQ, making me one of the more knowledgeable APTErs (alt.pave.the.earth).

How did it originally start?
APTE was started a few years ago, but no one recalls when or why.



Do you like it?
Absolutely. I love being with such open-minded people, people who challenge the current status quo and reach out to challenge themselves, while not being afraid of being laughed at as one would be in public. One of the great strengths of the Internet is its feeling of being able to say what you want and not be considered strange or odd for it.

Do you have a day job?
Yes and no, I'm a full-time student at Blaine Senior High School, where I'm a sophomore.

What is typical discussion like?
Typical discussion involves flaming new members, considering problems with the future of the earth, identifying people who are really paving parts of the earth, and listing people who we will condemn to the HydroPits after PaveDay1.™

What's the strangest thing (or couple of things) that you've seen online?
Probably the time some person wanted to cover the earth with cobblestones. Or the guy who wanted to laminate it.

What can people get kicked out of the group for? Does this ever happen?
Yes, and frequently. Some of the major offenses were those who did the following: wanted to destroy the Earth, posted political crap, posted environmental crap, posted crap advertisements (spamming), posted crap responses to crap ads, thought APTE is alt.test, liked concrete better, liked fuel efficiency, thought pavers are insane and more. *(Note: The official list of people that have been kicked off can be found via the WWW at: http://www.solon.com/~gutt/pave.the.earth/thelist.html)*

Are flames common in your group? If so, what usually brings them on?
Yes, but if so, they are in jest, usually correcting someone's errors in paving techniques or nailing newbies.

Does the conversation typically stay on that topic or how has it wandered in the past? What was the most it ever got off the subject?
It's never on topic :)

Describe your computer area:
It's in the basement, in the computer room. I have pictures of me, my girlfriend, other humorous stuff that I have collected off the 'net and from magazines, my stereo, and yes, my desk is a mess.

What's good about your gig with APTE?
The friendly e-mail, getting to know people, bragging rights.

What are some of your favorite postings?
See http://www.solon.com/~gutt/pave.the.earth/clasooo1.htm

What's on your screen saver?
Lines and Colors by Microsoft.

What are your favorite places to hang out on the 'net?
http://www.iuma.com/
http://www.yahoo.com/
http://www.solon.com/~gutt/ (that's me)

Where do you think the Internet is going and how will it affect us?
The Internet will become a means of transporting ideas and mail rapidly across continents, and will probably be the final demise of the U.S. Postal Service.

What is the biggest sacrifice you've made for your group or list?
Probably the 15 hours or so I spent on the WWW page.

What would people be surprised to find out about you?
That I've been using the Internet since like second grade.

Why is this newsgroup important?
PAVING THE EARTH IS OUR DESTINY.

(SKEWERING THE FAULTY)

FLAME THROWER

THE UGLY SIDE OF THE BABE-O-RAMA

Boors on the Web

by justin ware and sarah ellerman

Targeting individuals on the Web is a tricky proposition. Most home pages are thrown up as hobbies, without predetermined agendas; becoming a 'net celebrity is often accidental. But the Web is a metropolis with a small-town mentality, so when a lot of hits translate into real-world recognition, a sense of disproportionate power begins to inflate even the sturdiest of skulls. When that recognition is based on a dubious endeavor from the beginning, power becomes problematic.

A perfect example is Babes on the Web, Rob Toups' lovingly crafted list of hyperlinks to attractive women on the World Wide Web. Toups rates women on their pictures and then hyperlinks their personal home pages to his own, creating a smorgasbord of e-mailing opportunities for Horny Net Geeks (HNG) who would never approach half of these women in real life. But before we look at BOTW (and just to preempt any Orwellian taunts) we'd like to clarify our resoundingly libertarian position on freedom of speech. If Toups wants to stand on the highest mount and loudly proclaim his lack of taste and tact, that's fine. We'll hand him the megaphone. Legally, he's well in the clear; we're opposed to any attempt to censor him or shut him down.

Of course, as long as Toups feels free to say and link whatever he wants, we'll feel free to call his choice of speech inconsiderate, juvenile and misguided.

Toups has changed the tone of his home page in the last few months, which we suppose is positive. However, the substance remains the same. One of the problems with objecting to material found on the Web is that the medium is so fluid and transitory—with no hard copies made of contents, nasty portions can be altered in a whim, resulting in a blank-slate updating of the collective memory. The arbitrary nature of his rating system, from one to four Toupsies (or, as he shouts it, TOUPSIEs), seems a little less harmless when you know that "Babe-O-Matic," designated as one Toupsie, used to be the significantly less subtle "Dog-O-Matic." Not that it's there any more—Toups, wisely enough, has covered his ass as he has a right to do. But Toups, don't try to pretend these ratings mean nothing. You could rate the women sneezebots to Chipperwinks and any moron this side of a GIF download would still know that four Toupsies means you approve and one you don't. Since you're rating "only from the neck up" in a two-dimensional forum, our guess is that you're not ranking their minds.

Of course, according to Toups, "placing a home page on the World Wide Web is an invitation for entry. Having a personal photo on that page is an invitation for it to be rated." This is typically known as the "she dressed so hot, she asked for it" defense. Walking past a construction site, even (and perhaps especially) if you're dressed well, is not an open invitation for catcalls. Yes, the Web is a public forum, but the word "invitation" implies a two-way street. Unless, of course, you're crashing the party, walking up to their proverbial doorstep with a few thousand hot-and-bothered friends. Even then it's nice to ring the doorbell. BOTW never informs any subject she's been hyperlinked until a flood of fan mail overloads their server. That same e-mail was characterized by one recipient as "horny and drooling" and arriving at a rate of two or three dozen per day.

Toups goes to great lengths to reiterate his disapproval of harassment and virtual stalking, assuring the reader that he "will shake his right pointer finger while sternly saying, 'That's a No-No!' if such an individual irritates a linked author." I don't know if Toups has noticed during his time on the Web, but most HNG wouldn't stop spanking the 'net if their arms fell off. Toups may not be actively encouraging harassment, but he's sure providing an easy forum for it. To paraphrase the police chief in *Casablanca,* Toups is "Shocked. Shocked!" to find out these women are harassed, then casually lights up a cigarette and rounds up the usual suspects.

Toups has had plenty of opportunities to defend his site, but the other side of the story has remained remarkably hidden. Kim Rollins, the BOTW archenemy whom Toups seems weirdly fascinated by, has been

defined as the anti-Toups in numerous articles on BOTW.

Yet, Rollins says no reporter had actually spoken to her before IU.

One of the misconceptions Rollins cleared up is Toups' self-proclaimed willingness to delete links when requested. It took Rollins three exchanges of e-mail to get the link deleted. Even then it wasn't exactly philanthropic: He told her he dropped the link to her site because Rollins removed her photograph from her own page.

Unfortunately for Toups, we've read the e-mail, so this is pretty tough to deny. After all, according to BOTW, everything on the Internet, including e-mail, is fodder for his cannon.

We couldn't agree more. Anything on the Web is fair game, as is e-mail (assuming, of course, that you get it from the source). That still doesn't make BOTW a worthwhile use of bandwidth. The Supreme Court has ruled that directories are public domain, but BOTW isn't exactly a phone book.

What Toups is doing is compiling a list of women, in an order of attractiveness ascribed by him, then opening the door for a certain type of visitor. Let's be realistic—this is more like scribbling numbers up on a bathroom wall than providing an objective compilation. Besides, bathrooms don't have phones above the toilet with a direct line to the numbers scrawled in magic marker on the stall. BOTW, with its list of hyperlinks, puts these women one click away from harassment. Then consider that this stall gets 20,000 hits a day, according to Toups. Is it any wonder some women aren't thrilled?

Toups attempts to justify his page as satire, but he might want to check the definition of the word before offering this argument. Satire uses irony, wit and ridicule to skewer vices and follies. Unless you consider a picture of Toupsie ridiculous (which you might) and the home pages of women vices, there's nothing satirical about this. Remarkably, the general media has written almost glowing reports about BOTW, from the *Houston Chronicle* to Brock Meeks at *CyberWire Dispatch* (who claimed, completely erroneously, that "the National Organization for Women has waged an electronic war against [Toups'] site.")

"What amazes me," says Rollins, "is that everybody was falling all over themselves to excuse his behavior. I think one of the first signs you're doing something stupid is when you have to over explain why what you're doing is all right."

This might account for Toups' "30 Steps to Understanding Babes on the Web," his site's exhaustive, self-indulgent explanation of why criticism is unwarranted and why any anger indicates a problem with the critic.

So far, this deflection has worked; press reports have been resoundingly positive. Of course, this could also be because Toups, in his own words, has "managed the coverage regarding my site and focused it to the point of view I wanted." Toups must be loving this Flamethrower by now; one of his major defense mechanisms argues that "controversy, good or bad, creates publicity," and since he wants publicity, he's insulated from criticism. Well, just because he enjoys mockery doesn't make it less worthwhile. Criminals, corrupt politicians and Rasputin all got lots of press.

Toups was even confident enough to provide marketing advice for Rollins, who offered this copy of his e-mail: "This can be so much fun for both of us. Continue in your present mode and I will be the only one with a big grin. Remember, journalists do talk to each other about stories and once an image is developed about an individual, organization or product, it spreads among the community and tends to be constant in different periodicals. Notice how stories on BOTW and myself generally have an upbeat spin applied to it and no hard punches are thrown."

Well, bad karma catches up. Toups might have gotten a free ride in the press, even found himself nude in the pages of *Wired,* but other publications' oversights don't shift the fact that BOTW is rude at best and intrusive and offensive at worst. Even if our anger is "a product of our societal imprinting" as he claims, it's not our fault that society imprinted us with good taste and a modicum of tact. But Toups, fire back with what you've got—if it's true that any publicity is good publicity, a response on your page would only sell more copies for us.

LET'S BE REALISTIC—THIS IS MORE LIKE scribbling NUMBERS UP ON A BATHROOM WALL THAN PROVIDING AN objective COMPILATION.

BRAINPAN

by Stafford Huyler

Web surfers want sites to load fast. Real fast. In this era of diminishing attention spans and thousands of sites beckoning for attention, few want to wait several minutes for home page images to load.

To speed up your loading time, you can process these images through a series of filters to reduce the file sizes , while retaining detail. Here's a few tips to remember when processing images.

CONVERSION

Most graphic programs tell you how many colors you're using. You can reduce that number through a process called indexing. Indexing reduces the color palette to describe only the colors used in a given image, then discards the unnecessary colors. That makes the file smaller. Standard GIF format is 8-Bit (256 colors), but most GIFs will convert down to 7-Bit (128 colors) and many to 6-Bit (64 colors), yet still look acceptable. All of this reduction means smaller files. With files, smaller equals faster.

Another option when you reduce color usage is "dithering." Dithering, a bit-map function, breaks up the images into a pattern of uniform dots that are larger than normal. At the same time, it reduces color use from the whole spectrum to a much more limited one. Photorealistic pictures have areas of color blending and some dithering looks fine. However, remember that solid-colored pictures, such as company logos, look best without dithering because the dot patterns make the images look uneven.

TRANSPARENT COLORS

Within the GIF format, you can designate one color "transparent." The transparent color will not show because it will fade into the site's background. This is one way to make clear borders on an irregularly shaped graphic or one that doesn't have firm edges, such as a cloud. Now the problem you'll run into here is that the border between the transparent color and the other viewable colors may have an irregular "sawtooth" edge, which can be distracting. If you use Photoshop, you can fix this by selecting the magic wand and increasing the feather characteristic. Be sure to choose a true color for the transparent shade, lest the image take on a splotchy look.

I WANT MY 16-BIT DETAILED PHOTO

All right, if you've got to have one, try this: Convert the picture into a 265-color gray scale. The image keeps all of the detail in 16-Bit format, but without color so the file size will be much smaller. You can then colorize the gray-scale image into a red one to reduce it to 16-Bit, even smaller yet. Then make the background transparent. You'll have the image down to 6-Bit, yet not lose any of the detail.

LAST SPEED TIP

Here's an easy one for HTML programmers. Obtain the height and width of the finished area the image will require. Note those dimensions in the inline image tag. That way, a compatible navigator (such as Netscape) will not have to spend time computing those numbers. Users on slower computers will thank you. Remember to change the tag if you later shift the dimensions of the image. Otherwise, the browser will distort the page by forcing it into the previously programmed size.

GIFs vs. JPEGs

With the GIF-89 format, an image can organize its data by a process called "interlacing." When these image files are viewed in compatible navigators, the image comes into focus as the file continues to load. So when the file is finished loading, the image is sharp. Think of it as mini-blinds opening; at first, you see only horizontal lines. By the end, it fills in until you have a solid view. However, interlaced GIF-89 files are bigger than non-interlaced files so this process is not a good choice for small stuff such as navigational buttons. But for larger pictures, using interlacing is a good idea; it keeps viewers at your site since something is going on, even if it's just a picture loading.

The JPEG format has better compression than GIF. However, JPEGs do not interlace or allow transparencies and require more processing power to decode. Also, only a few navigators support JPEGs (named after the group that devised the standard: the Joint Photographic Experts Group). That's why most sites rely on GIFs rather than JPEGs. But for full-page, 8- to 24-Bit images, JPEGs are still the best choice thanks to their superior color compression. However, if you use JPEGs, see if color palette reduction works for you to get maximum compression.

Remember: Smaller, faster, stronger!

ARTIST AND WEB DESIGNER STAFFORD HUYLER, CREATOR OF THE ONLINE CARTOON NETBOY, COVERS THE INTERNET FOR WFLD-TV IN CHICAGO. HIS WORK CAN BE SEEN AT HTTP://NETBOY.COM. HAVE A TROUBLESOME WEB PRODUCTION QUESTION? SEND IT TO THE BRAINPAN AT IU@MCS.NET

(BEHIND CLOSED DOORS)

403 SEX IN CONTEXT

by Justin Hall

FORGET KIDS AND FORBIDDEN CYBERPORN, LET'S CONFRONT OUR PRUDISH CULTURE

Technology could either foster a healing synthesis of culture and community or accelerate capitalism's soulless commercial crassfest. To remedy silly synthetic sex with artificial sweeteners, I propose a healthy dose of humanity—Web pages celebrating the magically mundane moments of offline life. I want more folks to share their personal sense of the sensual online.

When I was younger I got off on porn mags. *Playboy* or *Oui*, the raw straight-up sex was enough for masturbation. Older, I have known real women with depth and warts and sagging breasts; porn often repels me. Belying artificiality—sex without strings, without personality.

Real-time sex has a context, nestled within relationship and history that add appropriate weight. The interplay of emotion, attraction and the quirks of each partner and situation, that is the raunchy fun of rolling in the hay.

By its nature, pornography is concentrated, extreme sex. Porn mags and porn pages feel weird because they present us sex out of context. Alt.sex.stories is a greater turn-on than alt.sex.pix.buxom.buxom.buzzom because it's folks writing largely for their own sake. They have a story to tell (true or not) that doesn't have to sell or win anyone over. More straight from the hip, more honest, more sexy!

I like stories better because there's build-up. They convey a better sense of character, place, setting and mood, more than another prostrated silicon sweetheart shucking her hot pants.

Sex-filtering software like SurfWatch forces erotic content into a ghetto. By segregating sex, folks learn it is to be found on pornographic pages, nowhere else. I am prevented from providing a positive page in example of sexuality, as I speak of sex in a relationship or as I explain how I contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

Concentrated sex is warped; it scares us, takes control of us, exploits us and alienates us. Concentrated sex is what we get when we prevent sexual integration.

When we ghettoize sex, we make a commodity of it. Purveyors of the straight-up nasty capitalize on the forbidden and taint our sense of the sensual.

Harlequin Romance novels are considered acceptable because the sexy stuff falls between the emotional wrangling. It is not considered brain warping to read about sex in the context of a relationship.

Online porn archives are another story. They are simply sanitized, software versions of our neon-lit urban outposts of sin with damp paper bags out in front and a guy with too-thick glasses behind the counter, with paranoid men furtively indulging their fetishes amid the racks. Like that porn store, pages of porn pictures exemplify the screwed-up sexuality of our culture. If people were permitted open channels of sexual communication, we wouldn't have thousands of horny geeks dialing daily into *Playboy* for their bizarre, alienating sense of the erotic.

If we continue to suppress and segregate even the most benign forms of erotica, we risk perpetuating this sexual alienation. No doubt there will be plenty of businesses to pick up the slack. For example, this post to my interactive list of sex links:

Netstar linked us to NetMate live video conferenced cybersex
And of it they sez.
This is 21st-century sex. Cybersex. Live video and voice communications with a sexy cyberbabe. Cybersex is safe sex.

Safe sex, alienating sex. I may have to use a condom when I sleep with someone, but I don't want all my lovin' to have that latex sensibility.

The Internet could open some minds, and free some souls. People who think they're weird can find out they're not, and lead happier lives for it; unless we decide they're deviant and dangerous and drive their voices underground. In that case, we will continue to alienate our sexuality, especially when computers are checking to see if we are violating taboo.

Offline, there is not enough frank and healthy sexual dialogue. This potential exists online. The Internet offers an opportunity to shrug off our prudish ways, explore the deviant, share our fantasies and fears from the sanctity of our desks. Giving up our neuroses over bodily functions and basic instincts would do a world of good for our culture.

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR JUSTIN HALL, 20, ENCOURAGES PERSONAL PUBLISHING AND STORY SHARING FROM HIS LINKS FROM THE UNDERGROUND (http://www.links.net/), WHERE HE HAS BEEN EXPOSING HIMSELF ONLINE SINCE JANUARY 1994.

How to become a Web Celebrity

by mirsky

People at the grocery store don't recognize me. No one points at me when I walk down the street. When I introduce myself at a party, ears don't perk up. I guess that's life as a Web celebrity.

Recently, I was lounging in my expensive, new bathrobe, watching workers install another bunk on my bed when I realized: There is room for more people like me. Even the least popular show on network television has more viewers than the most popular page on the Web. The Web community is small. It's easy to become notorious or famous on the Web. Anyone can be a celebrity in the virtual world.

10 STEPS TO BECOMING A WEB CELEBRITY

1. Develop a personality outside the Web.

For example, this guy doesn't qualify. (http://www.usl.edu/Departments/CACS/Staff/landry.html›)

2. Be creative, original and own a computer.

Although, it only really matters if you own a computer.

3. Think up a name for yourself.

I chose Mirsky. You might want to choose something else. Some suggestions: Bronsky, Ballsky, Flopsky or Tursky.

4. Realize you don't need to be a real person.

Photo of Martha Breckenridge, 57, the woman behind "Mirsky"

5. Create your own page.

It doesn't need to be special or interesting. For example, you might want to create a page about lozenges. Show different kinds of lozenges. Time how long they last and describe which ones taste best. Maybe explain "menthol." Do it soon, though—do you have any idea how many people will read this column?

6. Get as many links to your site as you can.

It's expensive, but you might want to give away a car. A few months ago, I entered an online contest and won a nice, insulated cup. If you can't give away any merchandise, offer sex. Promote it by saying your page has "more nudity than humanly possible." That should get people to look at it.

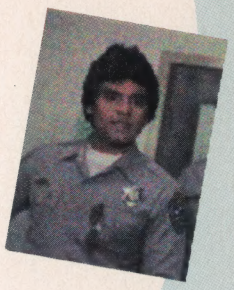
7. Garner as many Web awards as possible.

Here are some of them: Funky Site of the Day http://www.realitycom.com/cybstars/index.html; Fred's Web Hotspots, http://www.winmag.com/flanga/hotspots.htm; Mexico Cool Site of the Day http://dch.mty.itesm.mx/cool/

When you've been named Barbara's Best Bookmark of the Day http://www.shsu.edu/users/std/stdkco/pub2/best.html, you know that CNN can't be far behind. Display all awards, no matter how obscure.

8. Get a real celebrity to endorse your page.

This is hard. So far, Erik Estrada will not return my calls.



9. Think like a celebrity.

This is the most important aspect of becoming a Web celebrity. Although advertisers claim that millions of people use the Web, only a few thousand ever read a particular Web page on a given day. You are more likely to become famous by writing an editorial in your local paper. To become a celebrity on the Web, it's thus imperative that you forget that your audience is small. You must act and think like you are world-renown. To take on that indifferent air that makes celebrities so attractive, do the following:

1. Don't answer e-mail.
2. Make people read a lot of reviews of your site before they can actually see it.
3. Make graphics of your name huge and appear everywhere

10. Enjoy the benefits of being a Web celebrity.

It's hard for me to determine the benefits of being a Web celebrity. Once, I got e-mail from Courtney Love. Oh yeah, I almost forgot. I also got to write this column even though I really don't what the hell I'm talking about.

MIRSKY'S "WORST OF THE WEB" CAN BE FOUND AT http://mirsky.turnpike.net/wow/Worst.html YOU CAN READ ABOUT HIS BATHROBES AND BUNK BEDS ON PAGE 46 IN "ARBITERS OF COOL."

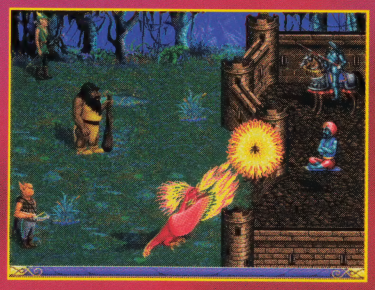
'Please, no digital autographs...'

Large

WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS ONLY HEROES REMAIN

"A first rate strategy title."
Computer Game Review

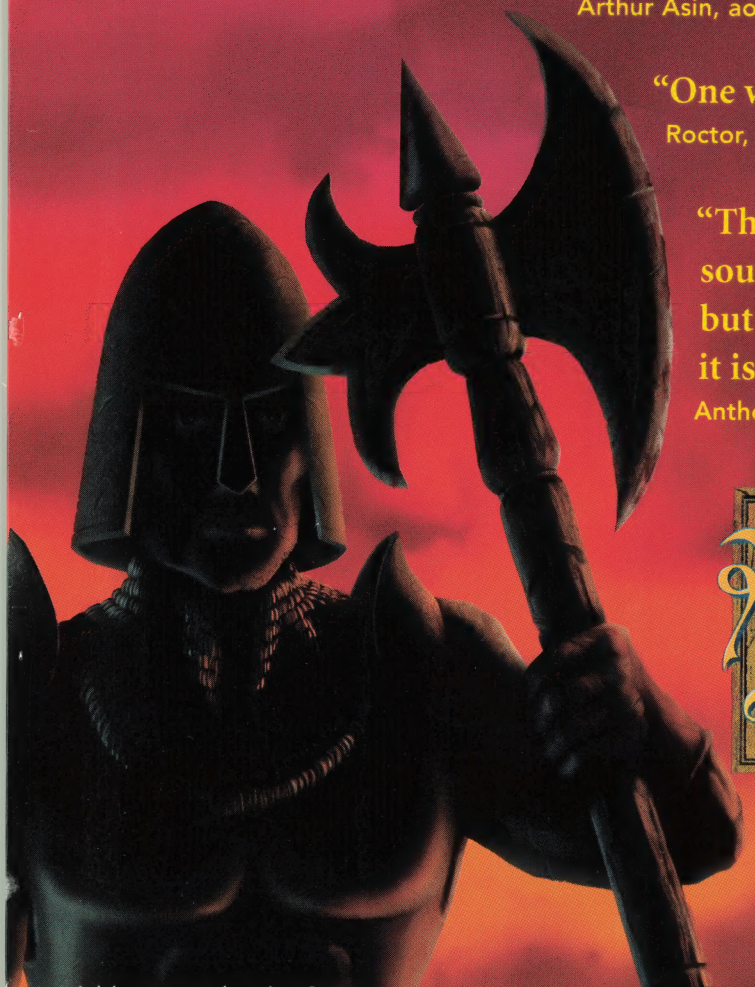
"Heroes is one of those games that DEMANDS to be played."
PC Gamer



"This game is excellent, possibly the best strategy game my wife and I ever played together."
Arthur Asin, aol.com

"One word: Addicting!!"
Roctor, aol.com

"The graphics and sound are fantastic, but most importantly it is just plain FUN."
Anthony Granada, aol.com



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